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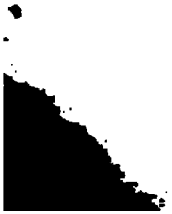
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THE HERBERTS

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "ELPHINSTONE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:
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1842.

609.



TO

MR. CHARLES PROSSER,

THESE VOLUMES

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS FRIEND AND KINSMAN,

THE AUTHOR.



CHAPTER I.

I know not whether I shall be esteemed very wise or very original, if I profess to have discovered that there is a great similarity in the progressions of all classes of human affairs. I do not mean to compare the rise, progress, and decay of nations with the youth, maturity, and senility of man; since that comparison has been made by every historian the world has produced; but I wish to go farther, and say, that the history of a nation might be the history of a family, or of a man, with a very slight alteration besides that of name, and that not only would the uprise, the prosperity, and the downfal of nations, be exactly paralleled by the history of families, and the history of families by the history of individuals, but the very qualities by

which like situations have been produced will be found in each case exactly alike. For instance, what is the history of Rome but that of a man who began life in an humble station, and by constant industry, economy, and vigour, outstripped all his competitors in the race for fortune; but growing luxurious as his wealth introduced him to the regions of luxury, suffered himself to be enervated by indulgence; and, embarrassed by the speculations which he had lost the power to manage, became an easy prey to younger and more vigorous competitors! And what has been the history of England but that of a nimble and vigorous mechanic, who has worked his way to a princely fortune, and becoming somewhat conceited from triumphant success, has considered himself qualified to thrust himself into all the disputes of his neighbours, through which he has brought on himself more embarrassments than all the open enemies in the universe could inflict on him.

There may not be much in the opinion above expressed, or it may not be original, but it is mine: and if philosophers will look well into it, there is something in the cause or the effect of every opinion honestly formed by an individual, which is interesting to the whole human race.

But whether the opinion be wise or foolish, original or hackneyed, I have an excellent apology for introducing it here—namely, that I could not begin my book without it.

But, however willing I might be to write a long disquisition on this subject, I do not suppose the reader would be equally gratified to read it; and I will therefore cut short my remarks by merely observing that industry, indolence, extravagance, and avarice, are as frequently the characteristics of a family as of a person, and that the virtues and vices which have produced family greatness or family ruin, will be generally in as exact an agreement one with the other, and the events of generations arranged in as regular and consistent a concatenation as the virtues and vices, and the opinions and actions, of a man. The reader will readily call to mind many a family as well as many a man reduced from wealth to poverty by a course of continual extravagance; and I believe it will be generally found, that when the riches of a family have been dissipated by generations of extravagance, it is as seldom that the descendant who inherits the empty coffers and the mortgaged estates of his ancestors lives a sober and careful life, that he may restore his family

to its original splendour, as that an individual who had dissipated inherited wealth, stops short in his career to work himself up to the state whence he has fallen. There is a family despair as well as an individual one; and whether a man has dissipated wealth, or inherited only the memory of it, he generally depends on some lucky chance to retrieve his lost glories, rather than on the personal exertions which reason points out as more effectual towards that purpose.

If, however, the reader has never met with such a circumstance, I will help him to one, which will not only serve as an illustration of my meaning, but will accomplish the purpose for which alone I have written this chapter—namely, to introduce the subjects of my narrative.

CHAPTER II.

THE person whom the above chapter was written to introduce, was William Herbert, Esq., of Alverley Hall, in the county of Gloucester. But before I work into the marrow of my narrative, I beg my reader to observe, once for all, that he need not be afraid to read my reflections and desultory chapters, inasmuch as they always lead, directly or indirectly, to something or other. I am aware that it is very much the fashion to make one half of a narrative consist of reflections which have no kind of connexion with the work in which they are found; and this custom is doubtless a very excellent one, as it enables an author to fill up a given number of pages with whatever matter comes first to hand: but as I confess that I generally *skip* all such reflections in books

that I am reading, while I should be mortified if my readers should do so in books that I write, I think it proper to promise that all my reflections shall bear some kind of relation to my narrative: and therefore request my readers to go on patiently, whatever their opinion may be, assuring them that they will certainly come to something or other, if they will only read far enough.

The above-mentioned William Herbert, then, was the last descendant of one of the oldest of our English families. For more than seven hundred years his ancestors had been numbered among the great men of their time, as, like other great men, from the Norman invasion down to the time of the eighth Henry, they had gained considerable fame by mixing in all the battles which could be got up with or without a pretext. During the next century they had considerably increased their riches, by thrusting themselves into all the religious intrigues; since when they had taken an active part in politics, by which, as they were steady to their principles, I fear they did not add to the family wealth. However that may be, of the grandeur of their origin there can be no doubt, as they came into England with the bastard William, which, in our

great families, is considered the most undeniable proof of purity of race.

The Herberts had often been a noted family in the nation, and had always been noted in their own county, the offices of magistrate, high-sheriff, and member, being conferred on the head of the family, in as regular a manner as those of churchwarden, overseer, and mayor, on the banker of a country town. And any honour which can be derived from offices of that kind the Herberts fully deserved, inasmuch as throughout the long course of years during which they had been "before the public," their scutcheon had not received a blot, nor had they been involved in any transaction which, by being only partially disclosed, could give a discriminating friend an opportunity of begging the public to form a charitable opinion of the dishonour which he insinuated.

During those eight hundred years of the British fame of the Herberts, they had been distinguished for many striking virtues, such as generosity, courage, honour, liberality, &c.: but for the last two hundred years, it must be confessed that they had neglected one of the most useful of all the virtues—namely, prudence. A few generations back, their rent-roll had been

as respectable as the roll of their pedigree; and half a dozen fertile districts bore witness to the useful virtues of their ancestors: but families, like men, grow old and foolish, and one pursuit after another, suggested by family consequence, dissipated the fruits of ancient caution, until, at the birth of William Herbert, the family property consisted of a plentiful portion of family honour and pride, and a few estates, more profitable to the creditors than to the heir.

In his minority, indeed, his estates were carefully nursed by his guardians, and, on his coming of age, were put into his hands considerably increased in value. Now was the time, if ever, to retrieve the family fortunes; but William had been brought up at a public school, where, though he had received an excellent education, he had not studied the science most adapted to his circumstances—namely, economy: the result was, that money,—which, though the root of all evil, with some kinds of culture wonderfully obeys the divine command of fruitfulness and self-multiplication,—under his care, became like a tender exotic transferred to the icy soil of the north, and faded away into a rapid and fatal consumption. The head of the house of Herbert had always been the patron of

a neighbouring borough, and William had not long been of age, when he was expected, as indeed he desired, to take the place which his father had taken. But that which had formerly been a matter of course was now a very doubtful matter, as he had to oppose those that had represented the borough during his minority, and had gained reputation and formed connexions in the borough. The contested election was decided in his favour, but at the expense of a considerable portion of the fruits of his guardians' carefulness. But besides the expense of obtaining this honour, there was the expense of securing it. To this end, he was compelled to make up parties for the amusement of the wives and daughters of the small gentry in the neighbourhood, contribute to all charities and collections, make his kitchen free for every idle vagabond in the borough, and give orders to all the grocers, butchers, and wine-dealers, to an extent not warranted by the real wants of his establishment. Besides all this, from time immemorial, there had been annual races in the park, and these he was compelled to continue, and, of course, to keep a stud also, to shew his spirit. These things he continued during some years, growing by it very popular and very poor,

so that, eventually, the office of the people's representative was not only an honour, but a convenience, as it kept him clear from the operation of the law of arrest. But in the course of these events, one thing happened, of some importance to him and to this tale, which is, that he took a wife, who, in due course, produced him a son and a daughter.

I am afraid to mention the circumstances of his marriage, lest I should be supposed to intend to satirize my betters: but, happily, such circumstances are so rare, that I shall be supposed rather to satirize Mr. Herbert than the rest of his class. The reader knows very well, that when a man of rank inherits his father's poverty, or has scattered his wealth by means of those fashionable instruments, dice, racehorses, mistresses, &c., it is the constant and very excellent practice to keep himself from gaol, and provide means for future gratification, by marrying some woman with more money than sense, with more simplicity than prudence, a child who knows nothing of the great world, or one purchased from her guardians. Thus William Herbert certainly ought to have done; but being a man possessed of very little of the very common common-sense, he neglected this certain and

common method of establishing his family, and actually suffered himself to be strongly attached, and finally married, to a woman who had very little or no fortune. The reader may inquire what there could be in such a woman to render a man such a fool, and I am ashamed to confess that there was nothing about her which could possibly have made her an object of the regard of one of our modern gentlemen; since she was remarkable for nothing but her virtues, accomplishments, and beauty.

It would be useless to discuss whether William Herbert were naturally deficient in the qualities necessary to his situation, or whether he despaired of any effectual service arising from individual exertion. Certain it is, that family pride, without family wealth, is about the worst estate a man can be heir to; for the obligations which a man of fortune entails on the inheritors of his honours may be an entail of ruin, if he spend his fortune in creating the obligations. But whether he were thoughtless, or whether he despaired, he was honourable and affectionate; he knew that his present mode of life must be suddenly terminated eventually, and he thought long and anxiously on the fate of his children. He could not but feel that his estate-

would be worse than nothing for his son, and would subject him to life-lasting trouble without anything to atone for it; yet he could not bring himself to part with them, and retire to a life of humble independence, which was the sole alternative worthy of a man of perfect honour and perfect good sense. This plan, if he had mentioned it, would have pleased his lady, but he could not endure the thought of taking his family to a lower situation in life than what they had been used to, or of leaving the old house, and the relics of his forefathers, to tasteless and irreverent new-comers; and he suffered things to go on in their accustomed manner, providing for his son in the best way he could, which was as follows:—

On looking round upon the other great families in the county, and indeed in the nation, he observed, that where there was a large family income it was invariably preserved undiminished for the first-born. If there were a second son, that very wealth could always force him into a lucrative situation in one or other of the government offices. If there were a third, he was placed in a snug sinecure at the bar; if a fourth, and fifth, they were put into the army and navy; and if Providence had extended the

blessing of a family farther than this, all that was left for the anxious parent was to get them clerkships in the colonies, or stow them away in the church. Now if Mr. Herbert had been a rich man with a spare son, such an affectionate parent would undoubtedly have followed the example of all other heads of great families, and looked out for a gentlemanly sinecure under government, in one of the courts, or in one of the services; and it is more than probable that he would not have looked out in vain. But, unhappily, he was known to be poor; he knew it, and had the good sense to feel that government would never do anything for him, inasmuch as he really stood in need of assistance.

As a last resource, therefore, and finding it totally impossible to do anything better for his son, he brought him up to the church; to which determination he was brought, by the fact, that he had the nominal ownership of an estate in Berkshire, about thirty miles from London, to which was attached a valuable living in his gift. This would assure his son a respectable maintenance, if it gave him not the power to redeem any one of the estates; and William Herbert knew well enough that the church-system was such, as to create hundreds of learned and in-

dustrious curates, who would be rejoiced to get their bread, by doing the duty for one-fourth, or one-tenth of the income, until his son should be qualified to enter on the living.

CHAPTER III.

Those ingenious gentlemen, the metaphysicians, —who have enlightened the world by explaining away the fundamental doctrines of religion, and the principles of human actions and convictions, —among other startling intellectual discoveries, have introduced a theory on good and evil actions, exceedingly applicable, comfortable, and welcome to all mankind, as it does away with conscience and duty, and makes virtue and vice affairs of physical temperament or organization—in other words, they hold that a man's merit or demerit is not to be estimated by his deeds, but by the amount of inclination with which he commits them. Men, according to these philosophers, are born with particular inclinations, which lead them, insensibly and di-

rectly, to particular vices or virtues; or, with some peculiar organizations, to all the vices, or all the virtues. Thus one man from his birth shall have an insurmountable repugnance to strong liquors, whilst another takes at once to ale, wine, and brandy, as his natural element; one shall be unable to live in peace without continually creating brawls or thrusting himself into every one that comes in his way, whilst another shall be as quiet and timid as a dove; one shall have an unconquerable bias towards irregular appropriation, vulgarly called thieving, whilst another's conscience shall be pricked at smelling a rose in a neighbour's garden; one shall only carry out a natural inclination by seducing every pretty girl that comes in his way, while another shall pass through life without ever acquiring sufficient courage even to kiss a chambermaid; and so on, through the whole catalogue of virtues and vices. Now, as by this reasoning it appears that it is as difficult for one man to commit a certain crime, as for another to forbear, it follows, as a natural consequence, that, since a man is not accountable for his inclination, the guilt incurred in committing it will be of very unequal amount; and that if a man be not praiseworthy for abstaining

from a crime, towards which he has no inclination, neither is a man blamable for committing it, if he is strongly inclined to it. From all which these philosophers deduce the conclusion, that as nature, when she creates a man, whose head a glass of wine can put into inextricable confusion, means him to be sober, so she could, if she would, create a man perfectly blameless in every other respect: a man, therefore, equally follows the law of his nature, whether he commit a crime or a virtue, and nature, and not man, ought to be blamed or commended. To which excellent discovery I have only one remark to make, which is, that if these philosophers succeed in overturning the principle of duty and moral obligation, it will be very probable, that when a man is moved by self-interest, convenience, or temper, to commit a crime or a vice, the being able to lay the sin of it to the account of organization, will materially facilitate the completion of his determination; and with all due submission to the teachers of the above enlightened doctrine, I should beg to decline allowing them to be very intimate with my strong box—that is, if I had anything in it.

But leaving this knot uncut, for the exercise of the teeth and nails of philosophers, I may observe

that, whether a man have or have not any merit in being virtuous, the man is undoubtedly to be envied whom nature has endowed with a disposition capable, not only of the passionless proprieties of solitude, but also of fulfilling the higher expectations of our nature in the highways and crowded places of the world, putting aside with indifferent hand the temptations, and scorning the dangers that would turn him from his right onward course—nay, I believe even the above-mentioned philosophers, although they know there is no such thing as virtue or vice, would prefer trusting their affairs or fortune to such a character as the one just described, than to one endowed by nature with those opposite qualities commonly called vices.

Thus much has been said, to introduce fairly to the reader's notice young William Herbert; for I would not sound a trumpet before him, and make proclamation of his qualities to forestal the reader's opinion.

When, therefore, I assert, as I am about to do, that William Herbert seemed by his natural qualities marked out from childhood to adorn the sacred office which his father intended him to fill, if the reader will remember the above metaphysical doctrine, he will see that I mean

not to praise him, but merely to state indifferent facts, and leave the reader to form his own opinion from incidents to be mentioned in the course of this narrative.

By natural qualifications for the church, I trust the reader will not suppose me to mean that while yet an infant, William Herbert discovered the qualities adapted to make a sycophant to the rich, a conniver at the vices of the great, or an instrument in the hands of the powerful for oppressing the weak, by the triune tyranny of a reverend tory magistrate. On the contrary, I mean to say that in his childhood he was meek and humble, obedient to just authority, and bold and refractory only when injustice was intended. Of his infantine genius I shall not say much. He was doubtless as clever as children of his age generally are, although he did not write Latin verses before he had learned to write or think good English or sense, which many great men have done, and afterwards heartily wished undone. As he grew up, however, his talents displayed themselves to be considerable; equal, in fact to fill a distinguished place in the church, by which I mean, what it should always mean, ability to fill any situation in human affairs.

I would say that William Herbert, in boyhood, was a great favourite with all his father's visitors, but that I might be thought to have accounted for it by a fact previously hinted at, that his father kept a good house. I will say, therefore, that he was not only an intelligent, but a kind-hearted youth, and deserved the esteem of every one who loved virtue. He might be somewhat proud of the consequence of his own family, but his pride was of a self-protecting kind, and kept him to the society of persons of his own rank, or without any, since it prevented his following the general tastes of young gentlemen for the company of game-keepers, grooms, stable-boys, and cock-fighters. In other respects, his pride was of that kind which is comprised in the word honour, in its ancient, not in its modern meaning; for it would not have permitted him to ask a favour from a person whom he despised, or resign his opinion when he knew he was right, to obtain patronage.

To such a mind, the study of ancient lore was not merely a labour necessary for the obtaining of a pecuniary reward, but a pleasant employment, engaged in for the very love of it—the best of all incitements to study. It was not

wonderful, then, that he excelled. He passed through school with applause, and a certain portion of fame preceded him when he entered the university: and if here the study of profane authors promised him university honours, his careful study of sacred ones promised, what would be infinitely dearer, the honour of a zealous and able preacher of the gospel.

As his mother, on his entrance in the university, had whispered a hint respecting their circumstances, his life at that scene of gaiety was not what is called a life of pleasure, although it was a life of pleasure to him, as it was the means of carrying into fulfilment his dearest hopes. It may be supposed that he did not acquire any great fame there, as he was noted merely for the propriety of his conduct, and the promises of genius. His time was chiefly spent in solitude, and every moment that he suffered to pass out of his rooms passed without pleasure, and was remembered with regret. Thus he acquired but few associates, as he was different from most other poor gentlemen, and did not go to the university to be obsequious to rich men; and rich and poor neglected, if they did not despise him, for the same reason—that he was poor. But all this mattered nothing to him. When

sometimes he was laughingly or wittily reproached for his love of solitude, he thought of his enjoyment in the society of Plato, Homer, and their ancient brethren, and felt that no mortal companionship could be put in competition with theirs; in which, perhaps, he was too little acquainted with the world to be a fair judge, since a man would pay but a poor compliment to mankind if he judged of it by the sample to be found in our universities.

But this life of delightful studies, and confident anticipations of future happiness, was not to last long. William had not been at the university a full term, when he received a letter from the family steward, urging his instant return home, on account of the sudden and dangerous illness of his father; and though he rushed from college like a madman, sprang on the first horse he could procure, and rode home with the utmost haste, he arrived too late; his father was dead.

CHAPTER IV.

IMAGINATION is as incapable of depicting the sorrow occasioned by the loss of a beloved friend, as it is of suggesting a subject for consolation. I therefore leave untold the feeling of desolation with which the widowed mother and her children passed the miserable hours, from the death of the husband and father, until his sepulture. In that melancholy ceremony there was no want of the usual magnificence: for Mr. Herbert had been an affectionate husband and father, and had gained universal respect as far as his name was known. It was not to be wondered at, that the widow and son gave the only public demonstration in their power of the worth of the departed, and their grief at losing him; they would not, as it were, smuggle into

the grave, like a mean or criminal wretch, him whom they had believed to be the noblest of human beings.

But, though they would not have believed it, money might have been applied to a better purpose than enriching an undertaker. Mr. Herbert had been greatly respected; but it is not to be supposed that anybody would sacrifice a claim to money in order to shew their respect: and, accordingly, no sooner was the funeral over than the door was assailed at all hours of the day by every variety of visitors, all of whom came on the same errand—for money. Whether it were a gentleman in a first-rate gig, a lawyer's clerk on foot, a dirty boy on a famished hack, a tradesman in a cart, or the general postman, the invariable object was to leave a bill. Rapid and massive they flocked in during several days, until the drawing-room table, which had formerly been set out with elegant and fanciful lady-like trifles, was ready to break down with their weight, and Mrs. Herbert and William felt the necessity of putting a stop to the continual disturbance. The steward was called in to the consultation; but though stewards are very honest, and very generous men on the stage, the Herberts received

but little assistance from theirs, as he assured them that he had lately paid Mr. Herbert every farthing he could raise, and had little or nothing in hand, although by the bye, in a few days after, he purchased a pretty extensive estate in the neighbourhood, to which he retired, to make amends to the country for the loss of the country gentleman, his master, by becoming a country gentleman himself.

The commands of grief are generally armed with more irresistible authority than any other: but to a well-regulated heart the commands of honour are yet more powerful. Thus, though the Herberts would have loved to shut themselves up awhile from the world, and indulge together in thoughts of him who was so beloved and lamented, and would not for their own advantage have entered into any pecuniary transaction, they steadily put from their hearts the customs of grief, and worked at the accounts to uphold the credit of the deceased and the good name of the family. This was a labour which, to perform effectually, required not only time, but practice, in the latter of which the Herberts were deficient: but they set about it with earnestness, which often makes up for the want of many more striking qualities. William saw

that his father had either paid but little attention to his accounts, or had given them up in despair; for not only were the charges of a most extravagant kind, but on looking narrowly through the files of receipts which Mrs. Herbert had preserved, he found that many of them were for articles now—of course, by mere chance—charged afresh; besides all which, there was a long array of lawyers' bills, and bills for compound interest on dishonoured and renewed notes of hand, meddling with which is the very best and most expeditious method of insuring a man's ruin.

The accounts were narrowly examined, and accurately classified, and all that was required to conclude the business was to discharge them, a thing not easy to do, as they had no money. The estates were, however, still worth something beyond the mortgage-money, and although William might have preserved them for himself as his father had done, he resolutely gave up every claim to them, and put them into the hands of trustees for the benefit of creditors. He then, with what reluctance need not be told, brought the horses, carriages, pictures, furniture, and plate, to the hammer; his mother gave up her jointure; and the family had the

happiness to receive discharges for every claim made against them. But that was nearly the whole result of their labours; for when, after every debt had been paid, they examined the state of their own finances to arrange for their future existence, they found the residue of the family property amount to a sum about sufficient to purchase an annuity of fifty pounds.

At this time there happened to be a small decent cottage vacant in the neighbourhood, to which, with this small pittance, Mrs. Herbert and her two children retired, lamenting nothing in the splendid mansion they had left, save the cause of their removal—the death of the husband and father.

If the ungenerous opinion of La Rochefoucauld be correct, that we find something that is not unpleasing in the misfortunes of our best friends, it is a comfort that in the worst disaster that happens to ourselves, unless through our own fault, there is something pleasing. Persons who are very intimate with the ways of the world will not comprehend me; but those that bring an unadulterated heart to the perusal of this tale, will be able to imagine why, as Mrs. Herbert and her two children sat for the first time by the chimney fire in their small and scantily-

furnished cottage, and supped on a piece of bread and cheese, and a little of the village ale, they found somewhat in their circumstances and consciences which prevented the meal from being altogether sorrowful.

CHAPTER V.

Some amiable readers may suppose that the little cottage of the Herberts would be continually crowded with sympathizing visitors; since it appears improbable that they could have lived so many years in the style hinted at in the foregoing chapters, without forming a large circle of acquaintances and acquiring many friends. It was so; the list of their acquaintances contained all the principal names in the county; and that of their friends, most of the gentry in their own neighbourhood. One, however, expects but little assistance or sympathy in misfortune from acquaintances, whatever sympathy they may express in our good fortune; and it was to be expected that those persons would have the delicacy or the prudence to drop their

intimacy with a family who had gone down in the world, and must feel mortified at meeting their former associates; and, besides, whose house would be no longer a desirable visiting-place. But it was not so with their friends; for no sooner had the Herberts arranged their affairs, and settled themselves as comfortably as their circumstances admitted in the little cottage, than their old friends daily crowded around them, to impart sympathy and comfort. Those friends, to be sure, had not called at the hall while the Herberts' affairs were in confusion, and it was doubtful whether any fragment could be preserved out of the wreck of the family fortunes; but as I am charitably disposed, I impute that to the thoughtful and considerate disposition of the friends, who, doubtless, were convinced that the bereaved family would prefer the indulgence of their holy grief in solitude, to all the aids or alleviations to be gathered from affectionate friendship. Indeed, any other supposition would be very unamiable, since there would be no alternative but to suppose that these friends kept away from the Herberts while their assistance might be useful, and called on them to gratify their curiosity, and indulge in a complacent contemplation of their own un-

clouded good fortune, when it was not likely that any demand would be made on what lies nearest of all things to the heart—I mean, the pocket.

But I will not enter into a disquisition on the probable motives of Mrs. Herbert's friends, since I could not hope to convince anybody one way or the other; for the man who has never wanted the assistance of a friend, paints the imaginary character with all the beauties of poetry; while the man that has needed one, generally describes it in a more subdued and less heavenly manner. Suffice it, then, to say, that Mrs. Herbert's friends did call on her; and I am able to say, that it is very rarely indeed that the friends one meets with through life display a more disinterested and liberal kindness of manner than they displayed to her; for not only did they with the utmost earnestness inquire respecting the situation of their affairs, past and present, but with the greatest open-heartedness they expressed their opinion of the whole of the Herberts' conduct, and with an equal degree of liberality gave them advice for the management of their future life.

One of the first that called was Mrs. Jenkins, who was the wife of a retired London merchant,

of great influence, in the neighbouring borough, and who, being the grand-daughter of an Irish beggar, who was a lord, of course kept herself very high. After the usual preliminary budget of scandal had been poured forth, Mrs. Jenkins expressed herself in regard to Mrs. Herbert's situation, as follows:—

"Bless me, my dear Mrs. Herbert, what a nice little cottage you have got!—so snug and comfortable! I declare, I should really like to live here myself a few days. Your sitting-room is so like my housekeeper's room, only that is rather larger, and does not open into the cold air like this. Well, dear me!—I am glad you are settled so nicely!"

"Yes; I have no doubt we shall be very comfortable," Mrs. Herbert replied.

"I am sure I hope you will—it is such a nice place to come to occasionally. Bless me, Mr. Jenkins! only think of a trip over here, in the summer, to eat strawberries and cream—delicious! But now, Mrs. Herbert, I should think you must feel too confined sometimes, after being used to the Hall, which was such a fine large house, with so many conveniences."

"I would not wish to exchange this house for the Hall," Mrs. Herbert replied.

"Would you not?" replied the friend. "Well, that's right! 'Tis no use complaining; and, to be sure, you have no grooms and coachmen, and cooks, and maids, to make room for. But, really, I have heard my father, the Honourable Mr. Blatherum, say that my grandfather, the Right Honourable Lord Licktory, resided a considerable time in a cottage, if I recollect right, not much larger than this, though I suppose it was a cottage ornée, so I dare say you will do pretty well. But you must miss your fruit, I am sure; you had such excellent gardens at the Hall. I wish you could see ours. Pray look in, if you come our way at any time—the walls are absolutely loaded."

"I thank you," Mrs. Herbert replied; "but I believe, the want of fruit will not much trouble us."

"Indeed!—well, I am glad you take it so well! But, really, Mr. Jenkins, we shall be late at Sir William's. Good morning, Mrs. Herbert—pray keep up your spirits."

Mr. Sayfun, who had been returned, through the Herbert interest, member for the borough which Mr. Herbert also represented, brought over his lady to visit her old friend. Mrs. Herbert, indeed, might have been called her pa-

troness, since, though Mr. Sayfun was of an old family, he had not been long in the neighbourhood, and his lady, as she belonged to the middle ranks of society, had been looked on somewhat doubtfully, until Mrs. Herbert introduced her to her circle of friends.

"I am so glad to see you," said Mrs. S., with great alacrity; "I was afraid you would not look so well, after what you have had to bear. I pity you, Mrs. Herbert—indeed I do, sincerely."

Mrs. Herbert put her handkerchief to her eyes, as the tones and accents of sympathy reminded her how truly she was to be pitied for the loss of so good a husband.

"Nobody can tell what I have felt on your account," continued Mrs. S.; "to be compelled to leave a house, in which you had lived in such style, and come to such a place as this!"

Mrs. Herbert took her handkerchief from her eyes, while her friend was speaking, and replied, in a tone of perfect calmness, "I believe, my dear Mrs. Sayfun, that you have been misinformed on that point. We left the Hall voluntarily, in obedience to the honourable wishes of my son, who was more deeply concerned, in a pecuniary way, than I was."

"Well, really, my dear friend," said Mrs. Sayfun, "I had no notion that anybody could prefer this cottage to the Hall; but, to be sure, you know best. And do you really prefer the cottage?"

"Circumstances might make me wish for even a humbler house than this; and I assure you, I leave the Hall without regret."

"Circumstances!—ah! to be sure; when one's circumstances do not suit a large establishment, one must put up with a smaller one; and really, my dear Mrs. Herbert, I have often said to Mr. S., how very wrong it was in Mr. Herbert, poor man! to live at such an enormous expense, when his circumstances——"

"I beg to inform you," interrupted William, in a tone higher than politeness would warrant — "I beg to inform you, that whoever invented such insinuations against my father, was a——"

"Hush, William!—my dear boy, be silent!" interposed Mrs. Herbert; at the same time pressing the hand of her son, who sat by her side. Then, replying to her visitor, she said— "I am not aware that anything in our situation could have called for such remarks, as you say have been made; but I may say, that if I had

known that our friends had drawn such conclusions from our conduct, I would have taken measures for effectually preventing a repetition of them."

"Would you? Well, I am so sorry; for, positively, I often told Mr. S., after some of your beautiful parties, that I really would mention it to you, as everybody could see how it must end."

"To be sure," said Mr. Sayfun; "he lived at a great expense, and I don't see how he could do it conscientiously—due regard being had to the interest of his family, especially voting as he did. Why, if he had voted for those two government measures last session, he might have obtained as profitable an office as mine."

"But I heard my husband say that he did not approve of those two measures."

"Why, Mrs. Herbert, one must take care of one's own interest; otherwise, I am free to confess, I could not say much myself in favour of those measures."

"It would have been difficult, I believe, Sir, to have given them any more eloquent support than was comprised in voting for them."

"To be sure, it was a close division; and as the measures were of vast importance to minis-

ters, every vote became exceedingly valuable. And I must say, I wish Mr. Herbert could have been persuaded to vote with me, as he might have left you in a state of great comfort, instead of——"

"You are both very good," interrupted Mrs. Herbert, with the slightest possible tinge of impatience in her manner; "but I assure you, you need not have any uneasiness on my account. I have never had but one misfortune, and in that, your remonstrances could not have aided me."

"Well, my dear Mrs. Herbert," said Mrs. Sayfun; "I am sure I am glad you bear up so well; for, really, I should think it very hard if Mr. S. were to live at such a rate as to reduce me so."

"Our feelings are somewhat different," Mrs. Herbert replied, with great calmness; "but, excuse me if I do not press you to make a longer stay, as I generally walk out with my children at this hour."

The Herberts were also visited by Mr. Sharper, who had been a long time acquainted with the late Mr. Herbert. Mr. Sharper's father had been a solicitor in the neighbouring borough, and had been agent and man of business for

the Herberts, during a couple of generations; by which, and other engagements of a like kind, he had amassed a considerable fortune, which, with the business, he had left at his death to his son, the present visitor, who also had carried it on successfully for a few years, until, at length, he contrived to make a cheap purchase of the estate of a ruined nobleman in the neighbourhood, when he commenced country gentleman. As Mr. Sharper was a man of somewhat formal manners, he had always been considered by some people rather more honest than lawyers generally are; and, as he was very rich, he was universally respected, which will account for the intimacy which he had established with the Herberts. As soon as Mr. Sharper had made several acute remarks on the weather, past, present, and future, and speculated largely in the crops—that is, in their prospects—he opened the business of this first visit since Mr. Herbert's death, by observing, "I am extremely happy, Mrs. Herbert, to find you so comfortably situate, which, considering all things, I did not expect."

"Thank God, Mr. Sharper," Mrs. Herbert replied, "we are in a condition quite equal to our wishes."

"I am happy—very happy—to find you so resigned," said Mr. Sharper; "for I did not expect it, I assure you, though I must say that you are better off than could be expected, after Mr. Herbert's improvidence."

"I cannot comprehend," Mrs. Herbert replied, "why all our friends have formed the opinion that our circumstances make us objects of pity, and that we have been brought into them by our own misconduct."

"Not by yours, my dear Mrs. Herbert," Mr. Sharper rapidly replied; "I am sure everybody I have heard speak of it has laid the blame entirely on Mr. Herbert, who really had no consideration for the future."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Sharper; whether Mr. Herbert did right or wrong, I am answerable for it, inasmuch as whatever he did, was done for the benefit or the pleasure of his family, and met with my hearty concurrence."

"Indeed! Well, I really thought better—that is, Mrs. Herbert, I thought differently——"

"But, Mr. Sharper," said Mrs. Herbert, interrupting him, "I am at a loss to know why defamatory remarks are made on us, as you say they are, by the friends whom we formerly treated as hospitably as we could, and who, as

far as I recollect, were not unwilling visitors, especially as we have not asked them for anything—even for advice."

"Oh, you mistake, Mrs. Herbert—indeed you do! I do not mean to say that your friends made defamatory remarks; for, on the contrary, they speak of you with a good deal of pity. I was at a very large party last night, and I am sure every one expressed very great sorrow for you, and thought that somebody ought to do something for you."

"We are obliged to them for their good intentions, Mr. Sharper; but do you not see that our friends are rather over-hasty in their kindness, when they publicly talk of their own kind intentions, not only before they know that we need them, but before they offer them to us?"

"Why, I am sure, Mrs. Herbert, it ought to please you to know that so many people feel for you; and as for your standing in need of their services, there can be no doubt of that, because everybody knows in what a state Mr. Herbert left his affairs. In fact, that was what I called about. Mr. Herbert and I were great friends; he had his faults, to be sure; but really, on the whole, I respected him, and should like to do what is in my power for you. Now,

Mrs. Herbert, in your present situation, your two children must be a great burden to you."

"A burden, Mr. Sharper!" Mrs. Herbert exclaimed, with a smile—"a burden!—what, do you consider your children a great burden?"

"Why, no, to be sure. But then we have plenty to give them, which makes all the difference. I am sure, Mrs. Herbert, you can have but little enough for yourself, and must be glad to be released from two young children, who will keep you destitute."

"You state the circumstances in the most unfavourable manner, Mr. Sharper. I have, undoubtedly, a very humble fortune; but the presence of my children makes it a welcome one. I should be very happy, on their own account, to part from them, if an opportunity should occur of enabling them to secure a means of livelihood better than I can give them; but, on my own account, it must always be the very opposite to my wishes to part with them."

"Well, Mrs. Herbert, that was chiefly the business which I came about. You don't intend, of course, in your present circumstances, to continue your son at the university—to bring him up for the church?"

"I scarcely know what I intend yet. I have

not had sufficient time to form any plan for the future."

"Well, I may conclude, then, that you have no such intention, as, indeed—excuse me, but it would be wrong to think of such a thing now. People must conform to their circumstances, and my proposition would be more suitable for the young man. I could not advise you so well as I wish, because I do not know the exact state of your affairs, and perhaps it would not be quite delicate to expect you to enter into full particulars, though any statement you may choose to make shall be considered in strict confidence; but we can speak further on that. The firm to which I formerly belonged, and which is still in as large and respectable practice as when I belonged to it, would, I have no doubt, on my recommendation, consent to take your son as a clerk, for which I have no doubt he is, or soon would be, very well qualified."

"That is," interrupted William, briskly, "out of respect and gratitude to my father you would make me a lawyer's clerk."

"Hush, my dear boy!" his mother whispered; and then, addressing herself to Mr. Sharper, said, "We thank you for your professions of

kindness, Mr. Sharper; but I do not know that we shall require them to be put in practice. At all events, we will consider of your offer, and let you know the result."

"Dear mother, what need of consideration on this subject?" William warmly exclaimed. "You know too well what lawyers are, to suffer me to be connected with them. I cannot be a lawyer's clerk!"

"Pooh, pooh! young man," Mr. Sharper replied; "you must learn to be humble now, and let your friends judge what is best for you; and, let me tell you, I have known several writing-clerks get on by their industry and attention, so as ultimately to obtain their articles, and finally practise for themselves, and make a good thing of it."

"And were they honest men?" inquired William, with perfect simplicity.

"Honest men!" replied Mr. Sharper, "honest men!—yes, to be sure they were, as honest I am, every bit. But, Mrs. Herbert, I have another offer to make, which is, that Mrs. Sharper would be happy to assist you, by taking your daughter off your hands also. She has been, I know, well educated, and is a promising young lady; and Mrs. Sharper, therefore, would be very

happy to have her at our house, as her companion; and, as our governess has left us, she would probably find a good deal of amusement, as well as improvement, in superintending the studies of our four youngest children, who are very clever, but rather too high-spirited to be governed by Mrs. S."

"You are very good, Mr. Sharper," Mrs. Herbert replied; "we will think over your two offers, and communicate the result to you in a few days."

"Very well, Mrs. Herbert—very well. I trust, for your own sake, you will accept them; for you must have discovered by this time how rare a thing it is to meet with a generous, disinterested friend. Did I tell you that Mrs. S. desired me to say that when your daughter is at our house, if you should wish to see her, you are quite welcome to step over at any time."

"Thank you, Mr. Sharper; I will think over it a little, as I said before, and send you a reply in the course of a few days."

"Do, if you please, Mrs. Herbert, for Mrs. S. is exceedingly anxious to be of service to you. Perhaps you will write over in the course of this week, otherwise it might be too late, as

Mrs. S. may have engaged a governess. Good morning."

These specimens of affectionate friendship might be carried to a great extent; but as Mrs. Herbert's friends differed only in the peculiarities of individual character, while their spirit was generally exactly alike, it will not be amiss for me to choose a fresh subject.

CHAPTER VI.

THE reader may form a poor opinion of Mrs. Herbert's gratitude towards her visitors in not joining in their remarks, and may consider her particularly dull in not being able to see those faults in her husband which were so kindly pointed out to her as the cause of her ruin; but Mrs. Herbert, although a clever and an accomplished lady, was not a passionate lover of money for its own sake, or for its attributes, and therefore was not particularly sharp-sighted in what concerned it. When she thought of her husband, she could remember nothing besides the happy hours they had spent together, his kindness and indulgence to her and the children, and the virtues and graces which had made her home such a heaven. When, as

sometimes necessarily happened, she compared her present situation with her past one, she could think of nothing but that which had directly caused the change—namely, the death of her husband. This one great misfortune, the cause of all the trouble she had ever known, absorbed all smaller and subordinate ones—she could think of nothing but her loss; and her husband, as in his presence her life had been one continued scene of pleasure, appeared to her as worthy of all respect and veneration, as he had always been of admiration and love. As sorrow for the loss of her husband was so intense as to incapacitate her from examining his conduct so narrowly and justly as to discover his faults, the reader must excuse her unreasonableness in not deriving consolation from the remarks of her visitors.

But the readers above-mentioned, being well acquainted with the ways of the world, although they complain of Mrs. Herbert's want of gratitude to her friends, will conclude that, as a matter of course, she bitterly reviled them as soon as their backs were turned, for offering to serve her in a manner not exactly suitable to her own tastes; but such was not the case. Mrs. Herbert did not, to be sure, derive much

assistance or comfort from their remarks; but she was one of nature's ladies, whom art had not corrupted; and as her friends had not ruffled the equable flow of her temper, she spoke of them as she felt, without anger or reproach.

"My dear mother," said Fanny Herbert, a girl fifteen years of age, when Mr. Sharper had left the room, "I am afraid you will think me very ungenerous for what I am about to say; but while Mr. Sharper was pressing his offers of service on us, I fancied he thought as much of his own interest as of ours."

"Did you, indeed!" replied William, with a smile; "truly a most amazing discovery for a lady of your years!"

"I dare say I am very silly, dear William," Fanny replied, somewhat puzzled; "but what is your opinion? Was I wrong or unjust in my suspicions?"

"I smiled to reflect that a young lady of your age and judgment could suspect our friends of thinking of our interest at all. Every word they spoke betrayed a wish to exalt themselves by comparison with us, or to benefit themselves by taking advantages of our circumstances. They called on us only to insult us!"

"My children, do not be hasty," said Mrs. Herbert; "our friends are not worse than the generality of mankind. All the harm we can say of them is, that they love themselves better than us, which is often the case with people who really deserve our esteem."

"Esteem! dear mother," exclaimed Fanny, with surprise; "can persons so incapable of a generous friendship be worthy of esteem?"

"My dear children," Mrs. Herbert replied, "before you have lived so long as I have, you will discover that the circle of friends from whom you can expect aid is a very small one."

"I have discovered that already," William replied, rather drily.

"Yes," said his mother, "but you are not to set down, as persons unworthy of regard, those that do not come forward so eagerly as yourself to perform a generous action. When a misfortune befals our friends, we at first are apt naturally to congratulate ourselves on our escape, so that our selfishness derives a momentary pleasure from their misfortunes; but when that first unamiable feeling has passed away, the heart that had cherished it for a moment may make room for something better."

"But, dear mother," replied Fanny, taking William's hand, "I can hardly believe that any better feeling could arise in Mr. Sharper's heart after offering to make dear William a lawyer's clerk."

"Pooh! I don't mind that," William said, putting an arm round his sister's neck; "it was his insolence in wishing you to become a teacher of his unruly children that I noticed."

"But, my children," Mrs. Herbert said, "although Mr. Sharper's offers may not have been what you might formerly have expected, and what he might formerly have offered, your circumstances may become such as to make even them acceptable, as they might secure you from want. I would not see you obsequious, but neither would I see you insolent. I should be sorry to believe that either of us would behave so coldly to friends in distress as ours have done to us, and I allow that we owe them little or no gratitude; yet they have done us no wrong, and we ought not to bear resentment. Even on worldly grounds we ought not, since we are poor, and must not make more enemies than possible, as we cannot tell whose good-will may become of essential use to us. But do not be alarmed at my coolness; I am not thinking

of parting from you. I shall never wish you to leave me while I have bread for you to eat, and even so humble a roof as this to cover you."

"We will never leave you, dear mother," the children cried, throwing their arms around her neck; "we shall be happy with you everywhere."

By the foregoing conversation, the reader will discover that Mrs. Herbert's disposition was very vulgar and unfashionable, since she was so charitable in her judgment of mankind, and impressed on her children the duty of humility and forbearance, rather than of arrogance. But in spite of this, Mrs. Herbert was tenderly loved by her children, and looked up to with as much respect and reverence as though, instead of being a kind and an enlightened mother, she had a box at the opera, and was a lady patroness of Almack's.

But as this chapter has been devoted to the sympathy of friends, I cannot close it without mentioning one very unimportant incident. The reader has concluded that Mrs. Herbert derived very little consolation from the kind remarks of her old friends, and would rather have sat with her children indulging in her own thoughts, than receive their visits. One mark of atten-

tion, however, at this time of sorrow, gave her an emotion of pleasure. This was not from a friend; and indeed, when I consider the person and the incident, I am ashamed to mention it, as not one reader in a thousand will see anything in it. A poor old widow, to whom Mrs. Herbert had formerly extended her charity, as soon as she heard of her benefactor's misfortunes, sent up her grandson, a boy of seventeen, nearly every day, with a basket of flowers or fruit, the produce of her little cottage garden. Her little token of regard was always accompanied by a respectful message, but the old woman did not presume to call herself until Mrs. Herbert desired to see her: and, whatever the reader may think, this little mark of attention, which Mrs. Herbert's friends would have ridiculed, pleased her more than all the remarks made on her own ruin and her husband's imprudence and extravagance, which had caused it.

BOOK THE SECOND.



CHAPTER I.

I HOPE the kind reader, if I shall be so happy as to procure one, will not suppose, that when I pay him the compliment of entering into a little confidential chat with him at the beginning of a book, I do it because I have somewhat very important to communicate, or because I am bound to furnish my publisher with a certain quantity of matter, and am therefore glad to seize an opportunity of thrusting in a page or two on any subject that comes first to hand, without reference to its application to the narrative in which both reader and author are so deeply interested.

I take the author and the reader of such a book as this to stand in pretty much the same relation to each other as two strangers starting

on a long journey in one of those obsolete machines, a stage-coach. These persons, when they first met in the narrow chamber which they were to occupy during a day or so, would look at each other for a few seconds very inquisitively, making an exact examination of every feature and article of dress, and when each party had made up his mind as to the character of the other, he ventured upon some such appropriate remark as, "I hope we shall have a pleasant journey," to which the other would reply, "I hope we shall; it looks very promising at present." And the coach started.

In the same manner, my kind reader aforesaid, are you and I boxed up, face to face, in this little book; and though I do not know you, I fancy you must be a respectable kind of person to be in such company, and I therefore pay you the compliment of wishing we may have a pleasant time of it until we arrive at FINIS, whither we are journeying together: and if you cordially wish the same thing—that is, if you set out with a determination or a wish to be pleased, if you will not turn up your nose at what, in your own mind, you consider very fair treatment, but even if any little unpleasantness should occur, you will not storm and swear like

a trooper, but set the pleasantness against it, and thus preserve an unruffled temper until you come to something better, by all which I mean, that if you will take the rough and smooth together, I shall not care what you may be, whether a *nob* or a *snob;* I would desire no better travelling companion.

If you are old enough to remember a stage-coach, you must have noticed how very cheerful the parties were as they took their places, wrapped themselves up, and speculated on the merry adventures to happen in the course of the day; and how quickly conversation dropped off when the coach was once set in motion. No matter how earnest the address, or animated the reply at first, the wheels had no sooner been put in motion, than you began to nestle yourself in your cloak, or in the corner of the coach if you had no cloak, and fixed your eyes on the trees and houses shooting by the window, until, perhaps, if it was not a very lively road, or the horses were dull, you fell asleep. After a time, however, the coach stopped, and you immediately sprang up in full possession of as much life and spirit as nature had given you, you rubbed your eyes and hands, let down the glass, put out your head, examined the sky and

the busy world of stable-boys and hangers-on around you, and as you put up the glass you rubbed your hands again, saying, as the coach started, "Well, I do believe we shall have a fine day."

You were got to the end of the first stage; and that is just our case at present: for I look on these books as so many separate stages in our journey through the work, at which a person can get out, take a little refreshment, and look about him. And as in a coach, every long journey is made up of a number of short, but distinct journeys, from stage to stage, so I consider every book a distinct portion of the general extent of road, which should have its own starting-place, where the author can give his companion a word of encouragement to persevere. I have known some authors get a reader into a book, and let him travel to the end without once speaking to him, or giving him a kind word or good wish, which, in my opinion, was very unsocial behaviour; and if the road happened to be dull, I have no doubt but the reader fancied his companion a very ill-bred and disagreeable fellow, if not a downright blockhead. But some authors err on the other side, and having got their reader safely fastened into a

narrative, begin to moralize, and sermonize, and display their learning and virtue, which the poor reader wishes at the —— other side of the world. It is, to be sure, a terrible bore, when you have snugly ensconced yourself in a corner, and are taking a view of the scenes opening around you, making your own remarks, and founding some delightful speculations on them, to have the author pounce on you and lecture you on a hundred subjects, that drive from your head and heart all the ideas that you were particularly anxious to carry out. To avoid both of these great evils, I shall divide my narrative into books or stages, promising my companion that I will not interfere with his thoughts while we are travelling; but, if I have anything to say, reserve it for the points where we change horses and look about us. And if I have nothing to communicate, I will pay the compliments of the conveyance to my companion, by hoping he is not fatigued, asking him what he thinks of the day, or whether he finds the road as pleasant as he expected: and if he tells me it is a pleasant day, gives me a smile, hopes the weather will not change, and assures me he finds it a nice country, we shall jog on together, very well satisfied with each other.

But at length the last stage is travelled over, the coachman touches his hat, saying, "Here we are, sir, at THE END," and the companions part, to pursue their various avocations. And often have I seen a person, who has been boxed up with a stranger for a long journey, begin the first stage in good humour, and, seemingly, with a disposition to extract materials for happiness out of everything he should discover, but, disgusted with the sullenness, the impertinence, the folly, or the stupidity of his companion, gradually become out of humour with everything, and growing sourer from stage to stage, at the end of the journey started away without a single "God save you," or a touch of his hat to his late companion. At other times, I have known these little journeys, through the discretion of the parties, terminate in a feeling of approbation, when, although the strangers might not so far break through the rules of English caution as to make an appointment, in order to become intimate friends, yet as they parted they shook hands, and said, with a good-humoured look, "It has been a pleasant journey: I hope we shall meet again, sir."

This, dear reader, is exactly what I want. I will not bother you with my amiability, nor

slight you with my moroseness: I will not make a show of my learning, as I hope you will have the politeness not to set me down as a fool: I do not wish to surprise or amaze you: I shall be quite satisfied if, when we part, you think me a pleasant kind of fellow, and say, "Farewell! I wish you good luck, and shall be happy to meet you again."

CHAPTER II.

It has been hinted, in the former book, that the Herberts were happy in their reduced condition: but this is to be taken with certain limitions. They were so far happy as to have no wish for a more exalted fortune; their destitution or poverty alone gave them no uneasiness; their happiness was complete, so far as worldly circumstances were concerned. But some kinds of resignation are sinful and dishonourable; and a man deserves the adversity which has fallen on him, if he will not use all legitimate efforts to raise himself to the state whence he has fallen. Mrs. Herbert perhaps would have been content to pass away her life in her present humble station, and find her pleasures in the enjoyment of her children's society; since the

safe fruition of what was now within her reach was better than those grander scenes which were continually clouded by doubts and fears. Fanny was too young to feel very keenly any vicissitudes of fortune which left her mother and brother by her side. But with William it was altogether different. He was passionately attached to his mother and sister, and the delight he found in their society he did not suppose could be extracted from any gift of fortune: yet the hopes which had been so dear from childhood still clung to him; he felt, that whatever talents Providence had bestowed on him were wasted; he considered himself disgraced in living on the small pittance which his mother had saved from the wreck of the family estates; and, reflecting earnestly on his wishes and his capabilities, he acquired a virtuous discontent with the low estate which fortune had placed him in, and longed to do something for his family and himself.

But this desire to improve his fortune, however proper it might be, was attended with one important difficulty, which was, that he knew not how to put it in practice, inasmuch as he had no funds to commence with, and although he had an abundance of kind friends, he could

not for some time think of one who would be likely to render him any assistance. After a pretty long debate in his own mind on the matter, he at length consulted his mother, whom he had always considered a true friend, although she was sometimes his counsellor; and one evening in spring, some four or five months after his father's death, when he was sitting in the chimney corner, with Fanny on his knee, and his arm round his mother's neck, he opened the subject, by observing, "My dear mother, I suppose that Mr. Sharper spoke the truth when he said it would be folly for me to aspire to enter the church."

"Why, my dear William," his mother replied, "I should be rejoiced to see you in the situation which we have always expected would be yours, and which your talents would adorn; but what are we to do? You must consider yourself, my dear boy, as a father to Fanny, and a husband to me, since your dear father is gone; and whatever you wish, I am sure will be for the good of us all. What do you think had better be done?"

"Why, we must talk it over," William said; "and I believe there is little danger of our forming a too hasty decision, since, without

money, all plans of life are pretty much alike—that is, impracticable."

"That is not far from the truth, William," his mother replied, "but, in some hands, a small sum of money will carry through a plan which would be utterly impracticable in other hands with a much greater sum. Industry and economy, vigorously practised, are very frequently more beneficial to a man than fortune."

"That is true, my dear mother, and I believe neither of us is incapable of practising those virtues; but I am below the practice of economy, since I have nothing to be careful of; and the utmost industry out of the walls of the university will not avail within them; industry and economy alone will not gain me a degree."

"Well, William," the mother replied, "you know we have about fifty pounds a-year. I do not know how to increase that sum; but you shall employ it in any way you may judge best."

"Fifty pounds a-year for a gentleman commoner is somewhat under the mark—in fact, it would be impossible to do anything with it; besides, my dear mother, if I could contrive to work my way to a degree on that sum, aided by a pupil or two, what would you and our dear Fanny do the while?"

"How much money, mamma," asked Fanny, "how much money would Mr. Sharper give me to teach his children?"

"Why do you ask such a question as that, Fanny?" interrupted William.

"Oh, because," replied Fanny, "if he would offer me a large sum, I would go and live with him and give you the money."

"Pooh, pooh, you silly creature," said William, kissing his sister, "you must stay at home and take care of your mother, and I hope I shall have earned plenty of money for all of us by the time you will feel the necessity of it."

"But, William," said Mrs. Herbert, "if fifty pounds a-year are too little for you, what do you say to selling the annuity? You know what was paid for it, and, of course, nearly as much might be obtained for it. Now do you not believe you could do more with the few hundreds arising from the sale, than with the annual fifty? You need not be at the university more than two or three years, and with a little teaching, as you say, I should think you might contrive to obtain a degree, and fix yourself in a situation above these anxieties for the future."

"My dear mother," William replied, affec-

tionately, "you forget that, if I were to take your annuity, I must leave you to starve."

"Well, then, my dear boy, we will sell the annuity, and you shall take us with you to the university, where we can, doubtless, find some cheap place to live in, and we will all live together, until your talents gain you some office of emolument, or until you take up a degree."

"Oh, yes, dear William," Fanny cried, in tones of delight, "that is the very plan. I should like that above all things. We will all go together."

"Ah, you tempt me in a vulnerable place," William replied; "your plan is the best that could be adopted with the means: but, mother, I will never consent that your means of subsistence should depend on chance. Nothing but an uninterrupted course of prosperity could bring this plan to a successful issue; for suppose I were to be taken ill, were unsuccessful in my examinations, or unable to obtain any lucrative situation in my college, or even if I took a degree, and were for a considerable time without a curacy—in short, if any one of a thousand possible things were to happen, I should be short of independence, and you would be inevitably and totally ruined. No,

my dear mother, whatever may happen to me, I will take care that I never touch that poor pittance, which, poor as it is, will preserve you independent."

"Well, my dear, what then do you intend to do?"

"Why, you recollect, dear mother, how very obliging Sir Thomas Mixen has been to me, both at our house and at his own. Now, Sir Thomas holds a good deal of land under our college, and I have no doubt he could exercise his interest greatly to my advantage."

"Yes, my dear son, he doubtless could," Mrs. Herbert replied, "but—but—I would not have you become suspicious of the virtue of your fellow-creatures, but for your own sake I must remind you, that we have seen the behaviour of some of the friends of your poor father; and I dare not recommend you to hope much from Sir Thomas."

"Oh, I believe he will behave differently from those false friends, for he can serve me without injuring himself; but even if I should be disappointed in him, I have another resource, which I am confident will not fail; I will call on the Bishop. You recollect how very comfortable he always seemed at our table, and what

compliments he paid me on my Greek when he examined me; and I am sure, when I inform him of my circumstances, and he recollects how earnest I have always been to enter the church, and how sacredly I have always considered the duty of a minister, he will consider himself justified in giving me his support, which, from his position and reputation, must be entirely effectual."

"I am sure," Fanny cried eagerly, "I am sure, if the Bishop were but to know William's wishes, he would be glad to fulfil them. Oh, how I wish I were the Bishop!"

"Yes, Fanny, if you were the Bishop," Mrs. Herbert said, "I dare say you would find some office beneficial to your brother; but, remember that William is not the Bishop's brother. I am glad, my dear children, that you judge of the honesty and generosity of mankind by those virtues in your own hearts—the bitterest thing in adversity is, that it makes a good man doubt the excellence of human nature. I am sorry, very sorry, that it should fall to my lot to cast doubts on your bright anticipations of human virtue; but I should be acting the part of a bad mother if I suffered you to enter the world with a belief which might result in an endless series

of mortifications and miseries. If all the world were like you, my children, your mother would be the last person to implant in your hearts a suspicion of your fellow-creatures, since that suspicion itself is an evil. But it is better that you learn from me than from a fatal experience, that as people grow up into years, the cares and the necessities of their own circumstances, to say nothing of the evil dispositions which they have to encounter, engender a coldness towards others, and an attention to their own interests, which make them insensible to claims founded on virtue and desert."

"What you say, my dear mother, is doubtless true," William replied, "but something must be done. I cannot stay here to live upon the income which is so wretchedly inadequate to support you. I must endeavour to employ the talents which Providence has bestowed on me: and, at all events, the Bishop must be well acquainted with human nature, and from his station I should suppose must be above the sordid views which the traffic, and even the pleasures of life create. The grand object of his life must be the advancement of religion, and when he knows that that object is dearer to me than any other, he will not for a moment refuse me his

interest. I will, with your permission, my dear mother, call on his lordship."

At this point of the conversation there was a knock at the door, when William rose and admitted a visitor.

CHAPTER III.

I MAY be considered to expect more than a modern novelist has the right to expect, if I desire the reader in this second book to recal to his thoughts what was related in Book the First; and indeed, as novels in modern times are written, not to make a reader think, but to assist him in passing away a few idle hours without thought, the purpose of novel writing would not be answered, if a reader could not forget every page as soon as he had read it. But in spite of fashion, I must request my reader, if he has forgotten the first book, to turn back to the last chapter of it, when he will be reminded that Mrs. Herbert was somewhat gratified by the respectful attention of a poor old woman, formerly befriended by her when in more affluent circumstances.

Now there was nothing remarkable or romantic about this old woman. She was not a person of superior education, not a recluse, not a Lady Clementina, not a broken-down woman of fortune, not a person who had seen better days. Her cottage did not contain a piano or a harp, an exquisite miniature, or a set of the German or Italian poets. Her name was Sally Hobson, and she was a poor little old woman, of no kind of dignity; just, in fact, like any other poor little old woman that one meets in a village. Her cottage was a mere hovel, consisting of four mud walls, surmounted by a heap of green filth, which had formerly been thatch; its furniture being a three-legged table, three or four rough benches instead of chairs on the ground floor, and a couple of bags of chaff lying on the floor of the upper rooms as substitutes for beds. Within the hovel, and without, through the bit of garden ground, everything bore as wretched an appearance as could well be imagined, save in one little spot, specially tended by the old woman, which was a strip of garden ground lying in the sun, and through the spring and summer beautified with a thousand brilliant flowers, as fair and as sweet in that abode of poverty and wretchedness, as those in

the gardens of the rich and the mighty. These indeed, were the only things she had to delight in, and therefore were the only things a grateful heart would desire to give to a benefactor, and a grateful heart Sally Hobson possessed if she had no other riches.

The reader may be a little surprised that I should mention again a creature in such humble circumstances, and of such vulgar breeding; but my reason for it is, that while the Herberts were discussing the hopes and fears of their fortune, as related in the last chapter, the old woman and her grandson were talking on the same subject.

This grandson was a tallish lad of seventeen, with a red face, and a set of features which, though not altogether bad, bore the stamp of almost brutal ignorance—for, in fact, he could not even read. When it is stated, that the young clown had a confirmed stoop, and walked with a shuffling gait, as though he knew not which foot to put first; and that his dress was the Hampshire frock, of a faded brown, with three or four large patches of the new material shining conspicuously on it, from its different colour, worn over a ragged fustian waistcoat and breeches; that his legs were adorned with very

coarse home-knit stockings, and his feet with half-boots an inch or two thick, laden with a pound or two of iron, the reader will readily believe that this young gentleman was not exactly the character to make a conspicuous figure in a polite novel or romance.

But though in person and breeding little calculated to awaken the sympathy of the refined and the learned, there was something not altogether bad in the character of Tom Wilson. He knew but little concerning sentiment, and had never heard of poetry; but he laboured hard six days of the week on a farm, and gave all he earned at the end of every week to his old relation, without thinking that he was doing a meritorious action; though indeed, saving a few pence which she occasionally earned by her knitting, the hard-earned and scanty wages of her orphan grandson were all they had to subsist on. And it must be admitted, that although it is a very excellent thing to make sentimental speeches and amiable professions, yet there is also something praiseworthy in kind and generous actions.

Now at the very time when Mrs. Herbert and her children were conversing respecting their prospects, Tom Wilson was coming home

from the hay-field, brown with the sun, which he had faced throughout its fiercest moments, and fatigued with the violent and continual toil of fourteen hours. As soon as the scythe had been put by in a place of safety, and Tom was comfortably seated at the three-legged table, ready to satisfy his ravenous hunger, Old Sally, as she gave the finishing turn to the rasher she was preparing for his supper, said,

"Well, Tam, my lad, I thought o' sendin thee up to the squire's lady wi' some blooms; but thee bist zo overdone, I spose I must send 'em up to-morrow by one of the little maids."

"Ha' you pretty near done the beacon?" replied the polite grandson.

"Here it is, Tam, lad," said the old woman, as she set the smoking dish before him; "and so you wunt goo up to Madam Herbert?"

"Whoy, I tell you, granny," replied the savage, as soon as the first violence of hunger was assuaged, "I told you before—hang it, if you want me to goo anywhere for you, I'll goo, and never mind the journey; but I doant like to goo up to Maister Herbert's, cause they're all so fine."

"Why, they're not so fine now as they wur, Tam, lad."

"Ah, but, granny, I'll be hanged if I know how it is, they're so different from we, like. Why, when I went up t'other day, and the old woman—and yet she isn't old, not half as old as you—when Madam Herbert cum to the door, I'll be hanged if I didn't feel all of a muck, and was afraid to speak. I'm bless'd if I wouldn't a gin any fellow in all the village a pint of ale to ha' gone up in my pleace."

"Why, she wa'nt proud to you, boy?"

"Noa, granny, she axed how your rheumatiz was, and who I worked for, and wanted I to goo in and ha' a cup of drink. But I'll be hanged, granny, if she talks like you and I. She says such nice words, and then she has such a pretty voice, and I don't like to open my mouth arter her."

"Oh, but, Tam, lad, Madam Herbert knows thee bist a good lad to thy granny, and her don't mind thy not talking fine."

"Well, granny, I don't mind her so much as the rest on 'em. But there's the young squire, William, no older much than me, and just hear him talk—why, 'tis like the parson in the pulpit. And then young madam, only look at her; why there isn't her like in all the village. And then, they're always so clean, I be always afraid

to step over the door-sill for leaving the marks behind me; and I'm bless'd if I wouldn't sooner run twenty mile for 'em, than stand in the room to talk to 'em for a minute, it always puts me in such a twitter."

"I be glad, Tam, that thee would help the old squire's family if thee could."

"To be sure I would, granny, for they're the best people in the world, I'll be bound. But when I comes whoam at night, from ploughing or ripping, I want summut good to yeat; and I'm bless'd if I can see how Madam Herbert can live on our flowers."

"No, Tam, that's true, my lad; but when they lived up at the big house, I would ha' sent up some of the blooms, and she would ha' took 'em; and if we send the same now, she can't take it amiss, and she knows we've got nothing else to give."

"Whoy, we ha' got half a flitch of beacon—send up thick. They can live longer on that than flowers: and I can work a hour later and bring it up."

"Thee bist a good lad, Tam, and thy granny would ha' bin in the workhus but for thee. But I can tell thee, lad, if thee was to offer Madam Herbert the flitch, she would be af-

fronted, and wouldn't let thee go to her house agin. Don't thee zee, these great volk don't like people to notice or see when they get poor, especially people as they have looked down on, like we; and they'd be affronted if we offered them anything, although, perhaps, if a rich man, like Squire Sayfun, was to offer them summut, they'd take it and thank 'em too."

"Ah, I zee; that's like I," replied Tom; "for if Farmer Thompson gid I the price of a pint of drink, I shud take it; but if Jim Giles was to offer it, I should be for geeing him a clout o' the yead, 'cos I gets better wages than him, and don't want his thrippence."

"Well, then, Tam, will you go up wi' the flowers?"

"Why, I doan't mind, granny, as soon as I ha' just cleaned myself a bit. But I'll tell you what I ha' bin thinking on. They ha' got a nice bit o' garden, but they doan't know how to look arter it themselves: now, suppose I was to offer to go up in the evenings, and keep it in order."

"That woant do, Tam. You see when you took the flowers, they wanted to pay you; and if you was to go up to work, they'd make you take wages, and they can't afford it."

"That's not what I mean," replied Tom. "I'll go up, and ax 'em to let me learn the young squire how to do it; and if they let me, you know, granny, I can work as much as I like."

Old Sally approved of this plan; and the young clown took the basket of flowers, and went up to Mrs. Herbert's cottage.

CHAPTER IV.

THE knock at the door, which put an end to the conversation between Mrs. Herbert and her children, as related in the second chapter of this book, was by our friend Tom Wilson. When William Herbert opened the door to his awkward visitor, a blush suffused itself over the sun-browned face of the clown, so as to be perceptible to every person in the room: he took off his hat before he had crossed the threshold, bent forward like a person falling on his face, and after two or three ineffectual attempts to speak, contrived at last to say, with a good deal of hesitation, "Our granny sent I up wi' these here bloomings."

"Walk in, if you please, young man," said William.

"Thankee, sir," said Tom, entering as far as the door mat, where he very carefully wiped his shoes.

"And how is the good dame?" asked Mrs. Herbert.

"Whoy, she be brave," quoth Tom.

"I hope she does not spoil her pretty flower-garden to gratify us."

"Oh, noa, there's plenty of 'em: and I'll be dal'd if I doan't wish they was all dead, and we could rise more taters."

"But, young man," said Mrs. Herbert, with a good-natured smile, in which her children could not avoid joining her, "if your good grandmother is fond of flowers, surely you cannot wish them dead."

"Why, I beant a goin to root 'em up," replied Tom, "and I digs the ground for her, too; but you see you can yeat taters, and ye can't yeat no flowers."

"Why, there's something in that, to be sure," Mrs. Herbert said, very much amused in a quiet way with her unpolished visitor; "but walk in to the fireside, young man, and take a glass of ale after your walk."

"Why, noa, thankee. I ha' just had my supper, and doan't want no more."

"Well, then, young man, you must accept our thanks for your sweet flowers; and tell your grandmother that we are obliged to her. But Miss Herbert and I will call to-morrow, and return our thanks in person."

Thus saying, Mrs. Herbert put the empty basket before Tom, who took it up, and shuffled away towards the door: but as he was almost out of the house, he stopped short, rubbed his mouth, smoothed his hair, turned red in the face, looked more foolish than ever, and, after a good deal of stammering, said, "I hope no offence—but I—that is, our granny told I to say as how, if the young squire here likes gardening, like some of the girt folks, I can come up, and shew 'en how to do't—I mean, I can come up in the evenings abit, and dig for'n."

If the reader be blessed with a very excellent memory, and be not a very stupid person, he, or she, as the case may be, will have come to the conclusion, that Mrs. Herbert did not carry the pride of birth or connexion to a degree that made herself disagreeable to those not so blessed, who were forced into contact with her, which is too often the case with persons who consider themselves possessed of dignity derived from parent or spouse. Mrs. Herbert was an humble

woman—humble for her station in society; but still she could not be insensible of the elevated station she had occupied in society, nor was she uninfluenced by it now; for, in spite of what reason and humility could suggest to her, she felt at first shocked that a person whom she had formerly befriended, as a very humble dependent—as one even lower than her own servants, should now come forward, and by offering her assistance, shew, in the plainest manner, that she was considered sunk so low as to be in a situation to be patronised by those who would formerly have gladly gathered the scraps that fell from her table. This was the bitterest part of adversity. It was worse than the insulting pity of former friends; since it seemed equally to proclaim the public consciousness of her destitution, while it carried the feeling of pity into the lower ranks of society, where formerly nothing but awe and respect had been manifested towards her; and as she naturally felt that she must be considered below those that could pity her, and doubted whether this clown would have volunteered to do a thing which had not been previously sanctioned by the general voice of his equals, the offer caused her a more acute mortification than all she had previously

suffered. But this weakness, so natural in her circumstances, was rather a thought that rushed rapidly through her mind, than a conviction that left an impression on it. It was the momentary weakness of humanity, rather than the wretched pride of a heart which prosperity had corrupted. One moment sufficed to erase the feeling for ever. A single glance at the inoffensive clown, whose face was covered with blushes of maiden-like shame for the unwonted boldness which he had just displayed, and who stood, as it seemed, in awful, though in awkward, suspense for the word which she was to pronounce—a glance at her children, who took little notice of anything that passed, save the uncouthness of the ploughboy, which amused them in a quiet manner, and who were looking at each other in a still enjoyment, which was not outwardly expressed, even by a smile, visible to any eye but that of love—and the beauty and strength of her natural heart, at once restored to their original freshness, cast away the little prejudice which the factitious habits of society had engrafted there, and Mrs. Herbert was at once herself again. Turning round to her son, she asked, in perfect good humour—

"William, my love, what do you say to becoming a gardener? This young man says our piece of ground is a fertile spot, and he offers to teach you how to cultivate it."

"Why, my dear mother," William replied, with a laugh, "I should very much like to present you and Fanny every morning with a nosegay of my own growing, and I have the Georgics by heart; but I fancy I could construe the whole of the poem better than I could execute one of the rules. I do not believe that I should have any great success in the practical part of the science."

"Mamma," cried Fanny, in tones of the most gentle reproach," why, you would not surely wish our William to labour in a garden? Do you not recollect how tired old Ben and his workmen always were in the evening, after working all day in the garden at the Hall?"

"Oh, that be dal'd!" said the clown. "Squire William wouldn't hurt hisself at work. I'd dig for'n, and he'd only have to put in the seed, and just rake the ground over a bit."

"Oh, we could all do that; and I would grow some flowers, too," cried Fanny.

"You forget," said William, "the decision I announced before the young man came. I

shall leave you to-morrow, or the next day, at farthest. I cannot spend these best days of my life in contented poverty, and exercise myself, day after day, in raising cabbages and carrots. I must appeal to the few friends left to us; and if one kind heart will listen to me, it will do us more essential service than a whole life spent in gardening."

"Is not your name Thomas Wilson?" asked Mrs. Herbert, turning suddenly round to the young ploughman.

"Ees, ma'am," quoth Thomas.

"And did you make this offer from your own mind, or did your grandmother direct you to do it?"

"Hope no offence," Tom began, in a stammering manner.

"Offence! young man," said Mrs. Herbert; "oh, no; we are much obliged to you. But did your grandmother send you?"

"Why, ees, ma'am; her zaid I might come. I couldn't come if she wouldn't let me."

"Ah, I see," Mrs. Herbert replied, "you are a good grandson to the old dame, and I esteem you for it. Miss Herbert and I will call to-morrow, and talk to her about it."

Mr. Thomas Wilson once more made a cu-

rious bow, and sneaked away from the door, forgetting to put on his hat until he had got about a hundred yards on his way home. The next morning Mrs. Herbert, as she had promised, called, with her daughter, on old Mrs. Hobson. Very proud was the old woman when she opened the door, at the summons of Mrs. Herbert's knuckles, and saw who were her visitors; and many a curtsey of respect for them, and many a blush at the honour done her, did the old woman perform, as she led the way into the house.

"Please your honours, will you take a seat?" said the old woman, wiping the benches with her apron. "Law, to think of your ladyship's coming down here!"

"We are come," said Mrs. Herbert, familiarly, "to thank you for your sweet flowers: we are all very much obliged to you—you must come up, and see how much we prize them—they are the only ornaments of our little room."

"I wish they was prettier, and sweeter, to please your honours," said the old woman; "and it's very kind to take them of an old woman, like me."

"Well, well, dame, we thank you for your kind remembrance. But you must remember,

now, that we are cottagers, like you—we are not at the Hall now. Sit down, dame, we want to talk to you."

"Your ladyship is very good," said the old woman, seating herself at a respectful distance; "I wish you was at the Hall still; but we think of you just as if you was, and nobody 'll ever think your honour, or Miss Fanny, a cottager, like me and my Tam."

"I am glad, dame," said Mrs. Herbert, "that your grandson grows up a good man."

"Yes, ma'am, Tam's a good lad; I should have been in the workhouse long ago but for him."

"Well, Mrs. Hobson, your grandson, as you know, has offered to cultivate our garden, and, of course, you sanctioned his offer."

"It was very bold, maybe," Mrs. Hobson replied, "for folks like us to offer to do it for your ladyship; but I didn't mean any harm."

"No, no, dame; to be sure, I know that. But I should think, when the young man comes home from his day's work, he must be too much fatigued to work for us."

"Why, Tam does work hard; but half an hour isn't much," replied the old woman; "he

wont mind that, and then to do it for your honour—oh no, he wont mind it a bit."

"Very well; but we will leave that for a moment," said Mrs. Herbert. "I wish to speak to you on a subject that I have been thinking of ever since your grandson called on us last night. I believe it has not been in your power to send the young man to school?"

"Oh, no, your ladyship, to be sure. My poor daughter and her husband died while Tam was an infant; and all that I could do was to keep us out of the workhouse."

"So I have heard," Mrs. Herbert replied; "but dame, I suppose you would be glad that the young man should receive some instruction?"

"I hope Tam will do well, your ladyship," said the old woman.

"To be sure," replied Mrs. Herbert, "that is the object I have in view. Now, as your grandson has not had the advantage of education, I have been thinking that we could assist him in that respect."

"Oh, but if Tam goes to school now, we must starve."

"No, no, dame; if he come up, and help us cultivate our garden, I or my son can give him

some instruction, that may be of great service to him."

"I don't know," said the old woman, with hesitation, "I have no larning, myself; and, perhaps, if Tam can get to read printed books, he'll look down on his old granny."

"Oh no, dame; I trust that what we should teach him would be a means of making him even more dutiful to you, if that is possible. I do not wish, my good dame, to fill his head with any high notions, or give him a distaste for his present state of life, but provide him with resources and amusements that will guard him against temptations, to which young men of his age are peculiarly liable. I assure you, dame, that the instruction I propose to give to your grandson is meant as a proof of my esteem for you both; and that I would not make the offer if I supposed it would tend to harden the young man's heart, and make him indifferent to the claims which you have on his industry and respect."

"To be sure, your honour," replied the old woman, understanding about half of what she heard. "To be sure, ma'am, you wouldn't do anything to hurt a poor old creature, like me; and your honour knows better than me, what

is best for us. But, please you, my good lady, none of us ever had any larning."

"No, dame; and that is the cause of your indifference to it. I can assure you, that the education which I and my children have been so fortunate as to receive has been a very principal means of enabling us to bear our misfortunes with fortitude, and the only thing which can make me hope we may yet see better days."

"Ay, ma'am, but you are gentry, ye know," said Mrs. Hobson.

"Well," replied Mrs. Herbert, 'and I consider that one of the principal blessings of fortune is, that it almost ensures a degree of education; and believe me, Mrs. Hobson, that education and knowledge are blessings to the poor as well as to the rich; nay, indeed, more so, as it gives a poor person the means of exerting his natural talents, and of employing good sense and industry to his own benefit, in ways which would be impossible for an ignorant person. How can you tell, dame, what service a little education may be to your grandson at a future day? How can you tell what opportunities may occur of improving his fortune, and yours too, by means of a little learning?"

"Well, to be sure, your honour knows best; and if you think——"

"To be sure, dame, there can be no doubt of it. Knowledge can never be evil or dangerous. Knowledge may sometimes be employed wickedly by an evil heart; but such an evil heart would have been wicked in another way, if it had not knowledge. A cultivation of the heart, as well as of the mind, is what I intend, as that has blessed me with two good children; and I am sure you will be glad of it another day."

"Thank you, ma'am," was the old woman's only reply, for she was, in fact, unable to comprehend the sentiments of Mrs. Herbert.

"You have no books in the house, I suppose?"

"No, ma'am, they'd be of no use to such as we."

"Well, I dare say we shall find some that will do in my son's library. Only think, dame, of the blessing of hearing your grandson read the Bible to you every night after his work, and on Sundays; and then writing a letter occasionally to your relations or friends!"

"Why, yes," replied the old woman, with a brightening face, "that would be nice indeed;"

but you don't think our Tam could ever write letters and read 'em, do ye, ma'am?"

"To be sure he could, in a very short time."

"I'll send Tam up as soon as he comes whoam," quoth the old woman.

The conversation between the two ladies then diverged, so as to bring in the statistics of Mrs. Hobson's rheumatic pains, and the innumerable small complaints and petty grievances which are of incessant occurrence in small houses; and after listening patiently, and replying sympathetically, a due period, Mrs. Herbert, having walked through the bit of garden attached to the cottage, and put the old woman in a fever of delight by admiring the different flower-beds, returned home.

A little before sunset, that very unpolished specimen of humanity, Mr. Tom Wilson, the ploughboy, made his appearance at Mrs. Herbert's door, carrying a spade and rake, with which he immediately commenced operations in the garden. He was allowed to work as he chose for about half an hour, when, as it was growing dark, Mrs. Herbert went out, and requested him to give over for the present.

"I suppose your grandmother told you what we have been talking about to-day, did she not?" asked Mrs. Herbert, as they were leaving the garden.

"Ees; her told I as you was a going to make me read out of a book," replied Tom, turning red in the face, and looking on the ground, from the awkward bashfulness produced by the thought of conversing with the great lady.

"Yes, young man, that is the subject I mean," Mrs. Herbert replied; "but, of course, whatever I and your grandmother might agree on in such case, the decision must be left to you—it is not meant to force you."

"I shall do as your ladyship wishes, in course —I shan't go again you," said Tom.

The clown's answer seemed to imply that he had no objection to oblige Mrs. Herbert by studying; and she let it pass without remark, believing that such a motive might be stronger than the real value of education, which of course he knew nothing of. Most benevolent folks would have taken care to make the youth perfectly understand that he was receiving a favour, and would have pointed out its various bearings, to overpower his sense of independence. But

Mrs. Herbert was an eccentric woman, as this tale has proved, and she was content to accomplish a good purpose by any good means, although it might not be the most flattering to her, and in this case was better pleased to wait awhile for the spontaneous gratitude which knowledge would create, than to receive the lip-thanks and servile prostration of ignorance.

"Sit down, young man, and we will make a beginning of our studies," said Mrs. Herbert, when they reached the house. "Can you read at all?"

"Why, noa, ma'am, I can't—I have no larning," was the reply.

"And did you never wish to read?"

"Why, no, sure; what good would it do to the likes of I? it's ony for gentlefolks and such; but if your honour wishes——"

"But did you never wish to be able to read, when you have seen other people read?"

"Why, no—o; well, now I think on't, to be sure I did once, for a bit, sure."

"How was that?"

"Why, ma'am, I once went to Gloster market, and there was a wench as zung a precious good zong in the market; and I zeed the chaps

a buying bits of paper she had in her hand; so I bought one too, but I couldn't make nothing out on 'em. But when I got home, I shewed it to Jack Carter, and I'm dald if th' ould 'un didn't read off the very zong as I'd heard the wench zing at market, and I was gravelled at him doing it when I couldn't, for I yearns as good weages as him."

"Well, emulation is a good stimulant to improvement," muttered Mrs. Herbert to herself. "Now, Thomas, do not forget that Jack Carter can read, and you cannot, although he is no more a gentleman than you are; and if you will only attend to what I shall say, you will soon be a better reader than he. We can provide you with many pretty books, that I am sure you will like better than songs, although we have some of those better than you could hear at Gloucester market, and we shall all like you better when you can read."

Mrs. Herbert, having said the above, to awaken a desire of knowledge in the clod which she was to endeavour to make man, to benefit whom she felt a stronger desire than could have been caused by a reasonable sense of obligation, sat down, and commenced, with earnestness and patience, the labour of driving

into the brains of the clod-hopper the first elements of all knowledge—the alphabet. Mrs. Herbert's gratitude was not meted out by the measure of obligations conferred on her, but by the generosity of her own heart.

CHAPTER V.

It was mentioned, in a former chapter, that the plough-boy, Wilson, was to instruct or assist William Herbert in cultivating the garden at the cottage—at least, such were the terms of the offer; while, in the last chapter, when the work was begun, no mention whatever was made of Mr. Herbert. The fact is, William was not then at home; he had determined, as before related, to appeal for assistance to those friends of the family on whom he believed he could rely; and as he was thoroughly discontented with his present life of hopeless inactivity, and was never slow to act when necessity and duty pointed out the way, early on the very morning after he had mentioned the subject, he said farewell to his mother and sister, and started for the resi-

dence of Sir Thomas Mixen. As Mrs. Herbert did not live at the rate of three or four hundred a year out of her fifty, which is a very common habit with persons of high family and low fortune, but actually, by dint of the most incessant economy and caution, contrived to exist without the genteel accompaniment of duns, it may be supposed that her establishment did not comprise a carriage, or even a riding nag; and as Sir Thomas's house lay some thirty or forty miles across the country, in a direction not traversed by railroad or coach, William set out afoot in search of his adventures.

It was a fine morning — but that was a matter of course; he was in perfect health, and his heart was elated with a certainty that his dearest hopes were about to be accomplished, and hope and health could throw a charm on any outward prospect. A glory had not passed away from the earth before his eyes; he had not yet met with any misfortune, saving what the hand of nature had caused, and which tended to soften the heart. The world was to him what his hopes, and not what his experience made it; and he could still believe that generosity, sincerity, and the other virtues which he had been taught to love, were common among mankind—he had

confidence in human nature. With this exalted opinion of the race of beings with whom he was to struggle, and on whom he was to depend, his cheerfulness was not to be affected by the outward appearances of nature, or the quantity of labour he had to perform. His own gentleness of heart, and reverence for the world, gave him a more than common sense of the exquisite sweetness of the commingled melody of the myriads of hearts in the hedges, and groves, and skies, kindled into music by the golden brightness of the morning, and of the beauty lavishly scattered over every bit of meadow-ground, and every little sprig that sparkled like silver, as it waved to and fro in the sharp sunlight. But his cheerfulness was independent of these, and could have thrown a charm on the gloomiest desert. He was now at that most anxious moment of life which, perhaps, must be experienced by every man whom Providence has fated to labour for his bread—namely, when the individual is seizing an opportunity which, if it does not ensure success, affords ground for hope. With this powerful feeling in his heart, it may be supposed that the unaccustomed labour of walking between thirty and forty miles was unregarded, and that his mind had not

leisure to be conscious of such a petty circumstance as tender toes or aching knees, and indeed he did persevere with so much spirit, that early in the afternoon, much less fatigued than might have been expected, he made his appearance at Mixen Hill, the residence of Sir Thomas.

The reader will have gathered, from what has been said, that Sir Thomas Mixen was an old friend of the Herberts; but it must not be supposed that this intimacy had been like that which sometimes subsists between great families who lead retired lives in the same neighbourhood—a friendly connexion, as it were, of two races, carried on generation after generation, and cemented by constant good offices and occasional intermarriages. The families of Mixen and Herbert had not been known to each other before the present generation, and the acquaintance had originated in the House of Commons, from the circumstance that Mr. Herbert and Sir Thomas generally voted on the same side; so that the vicinity of their residences naturally led to a mutual desire for acquaintance. But, indeed, before the present generation, the Mixens could hardly be said to belong to a family; for not only was Sir Thomas unable to point out the particular department

of state in which his ancestors had distinguished themselves, or the great families whose arms they had quartered, but if he were a conscientious man, he would have been loth to swear that he had ever had any ancestors at all, unless a father and grandfather might be so called, beyond which two of his progenitors no written document or human memory contained a notice of his race. Mr. Mixen, the grandfather, had been a respectable old-fashioned tradesman in a small sea-port town, where he saved a considerable sum of money. Mr. Mixen, the father, had employed this money to advantage during the war, in dealing in ship stores, and finally in ship-building; and becoming possessed of a large fortune, to which he thought a title would give great dignity, he built a frigate, which he stored and manned, and very patriotically made a present of her, men and all, to the government, for which, in the course of the same summer, he acquired the supreme felicity of beholding his letters addressed Sir Michael Mixen, Bart. But the grandfather all his life, and his successor so long as he was working doubtfully for a fortune, had been very democratical in their principles, and violent denouncers of all ranks above them,

and especially of the great landlords; but it was curious to observe how all this patriotic love of liberty and equality wore away as fortune became assured—until, as the war ended, Sir Michael, contriving to sell off his business just in the profitable nick before it finally ceased, invested his money in the purchase of land; he of course became as high a Tory as ever proclaimed the divine right of kings, bishops, and squires. Nor is there anything uncommon about this little history, for every successful tradesman or merchant is dissatisfied with his acquired fortune, until he has become one of that class he has always despised—country gentlemen; and you never see a tradesman or merchant turned into "gentleman," without seeing the bitterest of Tories; one reason for which is, that wishing to give their own family the character borne by the old aristocratic families, they imitate the most prominent feature of their public life, while their own habits of thought prevent their discerning those points of private character which go far to redeem the public ones which are offensive. Thus the old Tory, if he hates the liberty of the people, and claims an absolute power over the minds of his dependents, is the very best person for them to resort to in distress

or danger. He will make an obedient tenant comfortable; he will listen to his complaints with attention, so long as he does not disobey him. In his own person he is humble, because his own position is steady and assured; nor will he oppress any member of the community, saving by the operation of bad laws, which he strenuously supports, not from hatred of the people, but from prejudice and hatred of change. But the man who has to acquire for his family what antiquity has done for the other, seeing that the old Tory family will command the opinions and votes of their dependents, supposes that high birth and dignity are shewn by universal superciliousness and arrogance towards all below the rank to which he aspires. The tyranny which the old Tory exerts over a district, almost unfelt because the custom of centuries, the new Tory carries out into every possible circumstance of society, and becomes not only the supporter of bad laws, but the sneering, the gaudy, and the brutal tyrant over every one who is so unfortunate as to be poorer than himself. God defend me from a patriotic tradesman turned country gentleman!

Sir Thomas Mixen became in due time possessed of his father's title, savings, and politics,

and unquestionably had not disgraced the example set by persons in his circumstances: but William Herbert knew no more than that his father and Sir Thomas had sat side by side in the house for twenty years, and that the baronet had been a very frequent visitor at their house during that time. But even if William had been certain that Sir Thomas had a little of the tyrannical feeling natural to upstart families, which I do not mean to say was the case, it could have made no difference to him, because he was not only a gentleman, and every way his equal, but he remembered that, a very little time back, the baronet was accustomed to look up to his father and the family with profound respect and deference, so that William could not have doubted that Sir Thomas would be exceedingly happy to be of service to him.

As William entered the park gate, at Mixen Hill, he met Sir Thomas, who was superintending some workmen, when the honourable baronet, with the utmost delight to see his young friend, took his arm, and hurried him towards the house.

"Lady Mixen will be so delighted to see you," said Sir Thomas, "and upon my word,

now I think of it, this is the very first time you have done us the honour of a visit."

"I never had the pleasure of seeing your beautiful seat before," said William; "my time has been spent entirely between school and Alverley."

"Yes, I know; but we shall shew you some sport now, I warrant. You must consider yourself a fixture; for I am sure Lady Mixen will do her best to secure you."

"You are very kind, Sir Thomas, but I believe I shall not be able to make any long stay."

"Long! no, my dear fellow, not long—a month or two, perhaps. Don't be afraid of being dull. You know our side of the country is remarkable for beauty; and when I introduce you to a family of young ladies, now visiting here, and two or three in the neighbourhood, I am sure you will contrive to arrange excursions sufficient to take up the summer. But, pray, how did you come?—you must have left your carriage or horse in the neighbourhood; and you would not have done that if you had ever visited us before, and seen our stables. But I can send my groom for them."

"I did not ride or drive—I walked," William replied.

"In Heaven's name, what do you mean?" said Sir Thomas. "You don't mean that you have walked twenty miles this morning!"

"Yes, I have, and I don't know that I ever enjoyed a journey more."

"Well, there is really no accounting for tastes! I can make pretty good use of my legs in the fields, along with my dogs and gun; but I don't think I could walk a dozen miles on the high road, if my life depended on it. But here we are at the Hall. Be so good as to follow me."

It happened that Lady Mixen and her lady visitors had gone out for a drive when the gentlemen reached the house, and the baronet, by way of amusing his guest as well as himself, rang for lunch, it being now about four in the afternoon, and wanting several hours to dinner.

"Well, now, I am really delighted," said Sir Thomas, as he began to dissect a chicken, "I am really delighted to see you, my young friend; as indeed I should any member of your family."

"I thank you," William replied; "we thought we should have seen you in the course of the spring."

"Yes, I thought so too; but really my duties in the House have been of such a nature that I could not get away. You see, my dear fellow, parties are so nearly balanced, that on the eve of every important measure the leaders urge our attendance, and between you and me, if we could manage to turn out the present men, those members would stand the best chance with the new government who had best stuck to their places in opposition; so that, really, since your poor father died, I have not had an opportunity of paying my respects. Poor man, he was a very old and valued friend of mine. Many a night have we spent together in St. Stephen's."

"I am very glad, Sir Thomas," William replied, "that my dear father was so fortunate as to gain your esteem. A steady friend is become of great importance to us now."

"None that knew Mr. Herbert could help wishing him well," said Sir Thomas; "he was a man of such gentlemanly feeling and constitutional principles, as indeed your family always has been. But, speaking of your family—I really forgot to inquire after my good friend Mrs. Herbert; I hope she is well—and the young lady."

"Quite well, thank you. May I not have the pleasure of informing them that you will call shortly?"

"I shall be most happy. Let me see—did I not hear that you had left the Hall?"

"Oh yes; we live now at Burnside, about six miles this side Alverley."

"I hope, my dear friend, you are very comfortably situated."

"Yes—that is, better perhaps than we had reason to expect at first."

"I suppose you keep up your interest in Alverley? By-the-bye, there was a little bad management in letting that Whiggish scoundrel Liborel slip in at your father's death. But I suppose you will be of age shortly, and will make all right at the next election."

"Dear Sir Thomas, have you forgotten that I have been educated for the church?"

"Oh! yes; so you were; I recollect. But as you can't have been ordained yet, it can make no difference; but, indeed, it will be all the better for you, for if you stick to church and state, and maintain the principles of our glorious constitution, as I have no doubt you will do, your education will secure you the support of the bishops; and, let me tell you, that's no bad thing."

"Excuse me, Sir Thomas; are you really not aware that our present circumstances are such as to make that impossible?"

"No, certainly. I did hear, of course, that your poor father had not left things as might have been wished, and that the house had been given up; which I thought not very well judged, because it might have been retained in the family some years, with a little proper management. But even after this, I see no reason, my dear friend, for your giving up the station which your fathers have occupied so long. A single vote is of great consequence in these days; and by minding how you gave it, you might acquire a very strong claim to the consideration of the ministry. And as for being rather shorter of cash than some other members of the house, that is not worthy of consideration; for we have several in the house, whose qualifications, God knows, it would be very dangerous to examine too closely."

"I am obliged for the interest you take in my concerns," said William, "but my heart is set upon the church."

"Well, if that's the case, no more is to be said. But you must always consider Mixen Hall your own. I hope you will settle down in

the county, as I dare say you will; and I can always find you a day's shooting, and a bottle of good old port after it."

"Thank you, Sir Thomas; your kindness emboldens me to mention a thing in which your assistance would be very valuable to me."

"Indeed, my dear friend! I should be very glad to be of service to the son of my dearest friend, and I might have been of some in the house; but I have no influence in the church."

"As my father's old and cherished friend," replied William, "I do not hesitate to mention to you what I would not mention to many persons in the world. The fact is, my father's unexpected death left the affairs of our family in a most embarrassed state, so much so, that I saw no possible mode of arranging them, besides that of giving up everything to the creditors; and after paying off all demands, there was only sufficient property left to purchase my mother a very small annuity, which is barely enough to keep her from want. But I am totally without the means of going to the university to take a degree, without which, of course, all my previous education must be useless."

"Well, Mr. Herbert—in what can I assist you?"

"Why, Sir Thomas, I understand you hold a considerable quantity of land under the college at which I entered, and have much influence with the heads of the college, which might be exerted very beneficially for me, by enabling me to maintain myself at college, until I had passed my terms, and procured a curacy."

"I am sorry—very sorry," replied the baronet, with a lengthening face, "that I cannot assist you in this way. But you will, I am sure, see the difficulty of my position, when I lay it before you. My last election for Swigton was carried by only a majority of seven, since when, by a change of tenants in the borough, I have lost three supporters. That election cost me some thousands, and as another dissolution in the present state of parties might take place immediately, I must look forward to another heavy call on my purse. But you must be aware that there are many persons in a borough whom one cannot gain by money—persons whose station makes them very careful not to commit themselves, and those persons I have no means of gaining but by exerting my interest for their children."

"Yes, I see that; but——"

"Excuse me, my dear young friend, I was

compelled to gain two votes, by using my influence with the college last election; and there is one that I am endeavouring to gain now. But you know, I am not the only person holding property under the college, and, of course, my applications must be limited to the smallest number possible. I am sure you will see the truth of what I say, and be assured of my sorrow that I cannot serve you."

"I am very sorry," William replied, in a tone of dismay—"I am very sorry that you cannot assist me. Perhaps—might I ask if—perhaps in the course of the next year—"

"Believe me, Mr. Herbert, it gives me pain to refuse you; but my seat is in jeopardy now, and I am bound to use every effort to secure it. If, indeed, the party I support were in power, I could exert my influence with government, and give up my interest with the college to you; but I see no probability of that at present."

"Then, Sir Thomas, with your permission I will take my leave."

"Take your leave, my dear friend! I beg you will not think of it. I hope you will make a long stay with us. Lady Mixen, I am sure, will be most happy to see you."

"I thank you, Sir, but I must go. My time

is of the utmost importance to me now. I must apply to our friend the Bishop."

"Ah, that's the very thing. He can accomplish your wishes without trouble, for he has no seat to look after. Pray make use of my carriage; I will order it out whenever you like—after this evening."

William declined this obliging offer, and after shaking hands with Sir Thomas, and receiving his warmest wishes for success with the Bishop, left Mixen Hall.

CHAPTER VI.

William left Sir Thomas's house, disappointed, certainly, since he had expected that his father's old friend would be not only willing but anxious to assist him; but the feeling of disappointment wore away as he lost sight of the tall chimneys of the mansion, and fixed his attention on the city, and the Bishop who would be so eager to protect him, not only for his own sake, and for the sake of his father, but for that of the church. The sanctity of the head of the diocese was marked by a ponderous gravity of manners, which had impressed William's mind with reverence and awe, even in his earliest years, when he was not able to form a correct opinion of the importance and excellence of the Christian hierarchy; but when he had become aware

of his own destination, and had received that education which in this country is preparatory to filling the office of a Christian priest, with so much respect did he look on the institution, that he made the too common mistake of bestowing his reverence in proportion to the sacred rank of the person. Peerages and fortunes, and the personal honours conferred by society, lay out of his road, and therefore could not be objects of ambition, or of the respect with which one regards the honours to be obtained in one's own profession; but a grave dignified rector was, with him, an object to be respected above all secular dignitaries; an archdeacon was to be highly reverenced, and a dean looked up to with a more distant and humble awe; but a bishop!—there was something mysterious and divine in his greatness, occupying, like a king, his palace, where he governed with an indisputable authority, deans, archdeacons, prebends, rectors, vicars, and curates, to whom he was the fount of theology, if not of religion, and spread a halo of piety through the diocese. Religion was, in his hands, an instrument, for the employ of which he was answerable to no one on earth—he stood mid-way between earth and heaven—he was the dispenser of divine truth from the hands of

his divine Master to a world that lay below him. A bishop was, in William's mind, a person by whom all the difficulties which now beset himself had been mastered, by the exercise of the virtues which he himself was inclined to practice, and thus had gained the summit of the pyramid, on which to obtain the humblest step was his highest ambition; and, therefore, the city which contained the great and good man was, in his eyes, somewhat like the celestial city in the eyes of the celebrated Mr. Christian in the "Pilgrim's Progress."

All that day did William walk with rapid foot, and although little used to pedestrianism, and his bodily support being in proportion to the state of his pocket, reduced to the utmost delicacy in quantity, he was not more conscious of fatigue than a man who is running from the gallows—the only difference between the two being, that the one was running for life, and the other for the means of living. He was, however, very glad to discern, as the sun was about to set, the beautiful tower of the cathedral rising lightly against the golden sky, some six miles farther up the plain which he was traversing, and appearing as light and ethereal as the very sky which pierced in every direction through its delicate tracery.

It was too late to see his lordship on that night, since sunset in May was not exactly the time for a voluntary visit to a great man; and, besides, he was hungry and travel-stained, and the sight of the cathedral, as it informed him that his toils were over, gave him the liberty of feeling that he had walked quite far enough. He went into a little public-house, and having feasted heartily on bread and cheese and ale, the unspeakable deliciousness of which supper no one save a tired pedestrian can comprehend, he commenced a conversation with the landlord and his wife respecting the virtues of the right reverend dignitary whom he was about to visit. It was a theme always interesting to him, but now especially so, and he could have worn away all the remaining hours of the evening, in discoursing on episcopal and rectorial virtues; but, unhappily, neither the man nor his wife, though they had lived there many years, had ever heard of the Bishop, and were not acquainted with any rector, or even vicar, whose virtues could make the subject interesting to them.

Next morning he pursued his journey, and a little before noon reached the suburbs of the city. It had struck him as somewhat strange,

that a man who lived within six miles of a bishop should be unconscious of the blessing; and he turned into a cottage in the suburbs, where, of course, the holy man had often carried the words of religious hope, and the gifts of Christian liberality, to ask in what part of the city he lived: to his utter amazement, he found the poor woman of the house as little acquainted with the hierarchy of the city as the publican, and he walked on. He had walked only about a hundred yards when he came to a turnpike-gate, and as the money-taker, who leaned against his door, seemed a jolly good-humoured Briton, he stopped and asked him if he knew where the Bishop lived. The man scratched his head, bent it on one side, and put his hands in his pockets; but at the end of these signs of serious thought, said he could'nt inform him.

"Why, surely," said William, "you must often see his lordship passing your door on his visits."

"Can't say I ever saw him," replied the man, "but, in course, I know his set-out pretty well, and so do all the pikes in this district, I'll be bound."

"What! his lordship drives through your gate often, does he?"

"I can't say whether his lordship does or no; but I know the carriage does pretty often, when I wish they were at the devil, and so does everybody as opens gates at night; for I'm blest if the Bishop's carriage don't rattle us up as often as all the other gents' put together."

William concluded that the Bishop's charitable visits were incessant to be noticed in this manner by a person unacquainted with him, and he inquired more narrowly whether the gate-keeper were not perfectly aware of the locality of his lordship's residence.

"Really," said he, "it seems a little strange, that living so near the city, and acquainted so well with his lordship's equipage, you should know so little of him. Are you sure he never called on you here?"

"Called on me, sir! Why, what—but I see —never mind, I can take a joke."

"I do not joke! Do you really mean to say that you never had an interview with his lordship?—that you never called on him?"

"Called on the Bishop, sir! Why, what in the name of goodness, should I call on him for? —We never give trust."

"I don't mean in the way of your business—

I mean for those sacred purposes which induce people to visit their pastors."

"Oh, no, my good sir!—I never had occasion—I don't pay any tithe."

"I see we do not understand each other, my good friend," said William, "but I really want to see his lordship on particular business. Excuse me, *you* must be joking with *me*—you must have met your Bishop occasionally at church."

"At church, sir!—why, who ever knew a pike-keeper go to church! Every one to his trade. Pike-keepers stay away from church for the very same reasons as parsons go."

"What is that?"

"Why, to look after the toll, to be sure," replied the jolly toll-keeper, chuckling at his own attempt at wit; but seeing William look rather disappointed, he said—"but, my young sir, I dare say you will make out where the Bishop lives if you go up to the college-yard. You'll be sure to hear something of the cock-bird of the lot when you get into the rookery."

William Herbert, surprised at the familiarity with which, for the first time in his life, he heard dignitaries of the church spoken of, walked hastily through the little city, with-

out making further inquiry, until he reached the enclosed space of ground on which stood the magnificent cathedral, and which was called the college-yard. He walked about that silent receptacle of dulness, admiring the wonderful elaborations of detail, the beauty of outline, and grandeur of the general mass, wherein so many generations of British Christians had worshipped God. The noble testimony of ancient piety and genius awoke in him a thousand associations and reflections, in which for a while he forgot what had brought him thither, and stood rapt in delight, undisturbed, save when he observed a large modern house of vulgar pointed windows, built into the pure ancient wall of the cathedral, which, undoubtedly, a little ruffled the surface of his temper, and probably induced him to make a solemn promise to himself, that he would rase the disfiguring house to the ground, as soon as he should become the Bishop. But at length he addressed himself to his search for the Bishop's palace. He turned about to inquire of a passer by, but the whole of the enclosure round the cathedral contained not a visible human being. The sacred building stood in an extensive square, formed by lofty houses, with each a wall

before it, enclosing a mass of trees; the only channel of communication with the rest of the world being certain narrow and gloomy passages which it required a very experienced eye to discover. Very motionless was that spot—the choicest spirit of dulness seemed to have take possession of it. Here was one of the proudest monuments of human skill enclosed by the familiar evidences of human and present comfort, and no living being to be discerned,—it was such a scene as must have suggested the Eastern tales of vast cities utterly unpeopled. There was not a road to be seen in the whole extent of pebbled enclosure; it seemed impossible that those trees should have grown where they stood, or that the processes of vegetable life should go on in a spot so utterly without motion—the very air had grown dull, had lost its elasticity, and become incapable of conveying a sound. It seemed that even the aspen, which answers a breath as gentle as the last sigh of a love-smitten virgin, would here have sunk into the utter and eternal stillness of a woman's tongue—in marble.

After vainly looking a considerable time for a person of whom to make inquiries, he turned into one of those narrow passages before men-

tioned, when the first house in which he observed a living being, happened to be a public-house; and he walked in, and found that the Bishop's palace was that very hideous modern-Gothic residence, which he had previously condemned to utter destruction. William walked across the yard to the Bishop's door—his resolutions against the building very much softened on account of its occupier—and made a moderate use of the rapper. His appeal was very shortly replied to by a gentleman, not much less dignified in manner than a bishop himself, and much more striking in exterior; since it is not usual to see a bishop adorned with white silk stockings, crimson plush small-clothes and waistcoat, blue coat tipped with green, and profuse shirt-frill, which embellished the person of the gentleman who now made his appearance.

"I wish to see the Bishop, if his lordship is at home," said William.

The gentleman looked at him from head to foot, and, observing his heated face and dirty shoes, said, as he gradually closed the door, "No; he is not at home."

"When may I expect to find him at home?"

William asked, as the closing door just permitted him to see the nose of the footman.

"Can't say," was the reply; and the door was shut.

What was to be done, now? William knew not a person in the city, and could not think of leaving the neighbourhood without accomplishing his object. He was hungry, and went back to the inn. "Pray," said he to the landlord, "can you tell me when the Bishop may be expected to be at home?"

"Why, he is here now," said Boniface.

"I have just been informed to the contrary, at his house," said William.

"Oh! that must be a mistake," was the reply; "for his coachman and groom are playing at skittles in my alley now, and they can't be here when their master's away. I'll call one of them."

"A bishop's servants playing at skittles!" thought William. "What does all this mean? What a pity," said he to himself, "that a master cannot obtain servants after his own heart!"

He had never seen the great man in his familiar privacy; and the conventional gravity

which he had witnessed at his father's table had impressed him with an idea, that a certain outward formal expression of sanctity would distinguish every member of a bishop's establishment; to which nothing could be a more direct antithesis than playing at skittles.

The landlord returned in a few seconds, accompanied by a person, whom he introduced to William, and whom, as it happened, he knew.

"Why, Thomas!" said he, "you and I are old acquaintances; you recollect me, surely? I have had many a romp with you, years back, at Alverley."

"Why, sure! is it the young Squire William?" said the coachman; "why, you are grown quite out of knowledge! I hope you are well, and the squire, and the lady, and Miss Fanny."

"We are all well, Thomas, thank you," said William. "But my poor father—have you not heard that my father is dead?"

"I beg pardon!" said the coachman, touching his hat; "I never heard of it. Ah! the squire was a good gentleman—always a good word, and good living for servants. And the lady, too—we were always glad to go over to Alverley. Can I do anything for you, sir?"

"I wish to see your master," William replied; "but the footman has turned me from the door, although the landlord here assures me his lordship is at home."

"Sir," said the coachman, "there must be some mistake; for I drove my lord home from Lady Callington's ball this morning, at five; but perhaps his lordship is not up."

"Not up!" cried William, in surprise; "why 'tis past noon!"

"Yes; but you know, people can't get up very early after staying out so late."

"And do you say that his lordship was at a ball, till five this morning?"

"Yes; I heard the college clock strike as I drove through the yard this morning. Pray, sir, did you send up your card?"

"No; the servant did not give me time."

"Well, excuse me, sir; perhaps, if you were to call again, and present your card, my lord would be up."

"I don't know," said William, with some hesitation; "I am not used to these things; and I do not like to call again, after being turned from the door so rudely."

"Well, sir," said the coachman; "excuse me, sir; but, if you will walk with me to the door,

I have no doubt but the footman will send up your card at once, and give you admittance."

Now, although William Herbert had been from childhood accustomed to the usages of polite society, he had fancied that the house of a clergyman, and especially that of a bishop, would be open to every applicant, and the necessity for this formality had not once occurred to his mind; but, besides this, although in former times these ceremonies had been familiar to him, yet, when reduced to a very humble cottage, he had laid aside with the comforts and privileges all the formalities of high life, and in fact had not a card in his possession. On applying to the landlord, however, a blank card was procured, on which he wrote his name, and, accompanied by the coachman, again approached the door of the Bishop's palace. He met with a very different reception now, patronised as he was by Thomas the coachman, who was a rather greater man than John the footman. The door was allowed to stand open for a whole minute, while the driver of horses made the necessary explanations; and William was desired to walk into a room leading out of the hall, until his card had been presented to his lordship. In a few

seconds the footman returned, and desired Mr. Herbert to follow him, and our young gentleman immediately found himself in the presence of the Right Reverend Father in God. But what a difference between the awful personage clad in silk and lawn, and dignified with a divine wig, from that which now met his eyes at the breakfast table, in a plain suit of unbuttoned black, with a flowered dressing-gown, and slip-shod slippers—the sacred character which was wrapped up in the distinguished formalities of his station, had been laid by, and the peer of parliament—the spiritual lord of two or three counties—seemed now but a man. But all this augured well for William's cause, since his modesty was better fitted, and more inclined to recommend itself to the amiable master of a family than to any one arrayed in the conventional pomp and exterior dignity of rank.

It was, therefore, with pleasure that William received, after the first salutations of politeness, instead of a laboured disquisition on professional subjects, an invitation to take breakfast. The Bishop measured about six feet in height and a yard across the shoulders, and was gifted with a deep voice of amazing volume, so that whatever he said had necessarily greater force than

the language of most other men—his words had a ponderousness in their sound, calculated to subdue the mind of the hearer; so that whether his lordship condescended to be familiar, or maintained his more common and natural situation of reprover or adviser, the very grandeur of the voice, aided by the huge proportions of his person, was as powerful in annihilating opposition, as even the sacred office he filled and the exemplary manner in which he executed it.

"Good morning to you," said his lordship, half-rising from his chair, as William entered the room; "I am very glad to see you; will you join me in this chicken?—a very tender one, I assure you."

"Thank you, my lord, I have taken breakfast," was the reply.

"To be sure," said his lordship, when he had again cleared his mouth; "I did not think of that at first. The regular and uninterrupted habits of you country gentlemen are much to be envied; for I have no doubt they materially assist digestion. You will, I am sure, excuse my continuing my meal in your presence, when I inform you, that a late engagement of the past evening has caused me to lie rather late

this morning. I would not make a stranger of any member of your family."

William bowed, not being able to return his lordship's compliment by a phrase satisfactory to his own taste.

"I hope my friend Mr. Herbert, and all the family, are well," said the Bishop, after another attack on the chicken.

"My family are all well, my lord. But my dear father!—I thought your lordship would have heard of my father's death!" William replied, somewhat surprised, and much pained, that his lordship was ignorant of the decease of so old and intimate a friend.

"Indeed!—I beg your pardon," was the reply; "I was ignorant of it; it had escaped my memory—I am very sorry. Ah! he was my old and much-valued friend, and I can scarcely express my good wishes to you in a warmer manner, than by hoping you may follow as bright an example. I suppose, then, my dear sir, I must look on you as the future representative of Alverley in parliament."

"No, my lord, I thought your lordship was aware that I had been educated for the church."

"Indeed! I am somewhat surprised at that!

I should have thought that you would have followed my old friend into the House of Commons. Your election would be a matter of course at Alverley; and at a time like this, when attacks are constantly made on our glorious constitution, by dissenters, atheists, and papists, the assistance of a member of a family so distinguished as yours for the maintenance of sound constitutional principles is a matter of very great importance; and I hope you will see the necessity of altering your resolution."

"In my circumstances, my lord," replied William, "I believe that to be impossible; but, indeed, my heart has been so long set on the ministry, that I do not believe any temptation could possess influence over me sufficient to turn it towards any other object."

"Well, well, my young friend; we will talk it over. May I ask, to which of our universities you have given the preference?"

"Oxford; but I am no longer a resident, for reasons which I will lay before your lordship when you are at leisure."

As William said this, the footman entered the room with a packet, which he laid before his master, who, having opened it, arose, and taking William's arm, led him up to the drawing-room,

when he said—"My dear sir, I am sorry to leave you. If you had favoured me with the information of the pleasure you were about to give me by this visit, I could have made the necessary arrangements, but as it is, you must be content to be treated as one of the family. I had forgotten, in conversing with you, that I have an engagement this morning, to meet a deputation of my clergy, to take into consideration the evil progress which dissent is making throughout the land, and the encouragement given to it by our present unprincipled and unbelieving Government, preparatory to introducing certain measures for its extirpation. The importance of this engagement will, I am sure, plead my excuse until dinner. You will find amusement in the books and prints about the room, and probably Mrs. Trochee and my daughters will assist you to pass away the time between now and dinner. I have hardly time to dress for the deputation."

William said all that was necessary, and the lofty dignitary withdrew. The extreme affability of his lordship filled William's heart with the sweetest hopes that he had known for many months; and he set about an examination of the elegant books and knicknacks scattered about the room, which, perhaps, he was to occupy

alone for some hours, with a sense of delight which was an earnest of that greater rapture the Bishop's willing and effectual service was to afford him. The drawing-room was not large; but it was beautifully fitted up with every kind of moveable that could contribute to the comfort of a man of considerable fatness, and therefore not fond of bodily motion: and this indeed was the result of the episcopal ideas of comfort through many generations, every individual having left some impress of his ideas behind him. The first thing which struck a visitor of taste was, a magnificent engraving of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes, from Raphael's cartoon, in which the apostolic overseers of the church are so very dissimilar to our modern bishops. The only other picture on the walls was a beautiful painting of a nymph, by Guido, in which there was but little of an episcopal character, saving that the lady's dress was like a bishop's religion, exceedingly primitive. Having paid these pictures the attention due to their merits, William examined the books. The first that met his eye was the last number of the "Quarterly," with about a dozen paper marks in it, bearing evidence of careful perusal; but as he was not fond of orthodox

falsehood, couched in the Billingsgate tongue, he did not take the trouble to open it. Two or three pamphlets against the ministry, one of which bore a striking resemblance in language and argument to his lordship's charges to his clergy, and a volume of caricatures on the same subject lay on the principal table, along with the "Quarterly;" but whether their bad neighbourhood deterred him from intimate examination, or whether the necessities of his situation were so overwhelming in importance and interest, that he could not give his thoughts even to the spite of party which, with so many people, is sufficient excuse for the neglect of all actual duties, he turned away to another table. Here he found a few volumes of exquisite appearance, both in exterior and interior, consisting partly of costly illustrated works, and of volumes of drawings, probably executed by the fair hands of the Misses Trochee, with perhaps, as sometimes will happen, a little assistance from the masters. But however at another time William might have loved to pore over these elegant volumes, which were such as he had not for a considerable time had an opportunity of seeing, he laid them aside as soon as he discovered their contents; in fact, his thoughts were not now his own: he was

striving to accomplish the greatest purpose of his life; he depended chiefly on his studies in Greek: at this moment an old school edition of Homer would have pleased him more than all the richly-embellished modern books in the world, and he longed to be reading anything in that language in the house of a Bishop, who was so distinguished a master of it. He approached a small Gothic book-case, which, on inspection, he fancied was a lady's library, since it contained a few sets of modern novels, a few of the modern Poets, and a few ornamental works. But in the centre of this little library, bound with extra magnificence, was a fine quarto, inscribed "Anacreon," on opening which, William found it to be a large-paper copy of that Poet's splendid Odes on Woman and Wine, being his lordship's own edition, which, in fact, had created his reputation, and gained him his bishopric. Anacreon was an author not critically known to William Herbert, and he would have preferred Æschylus or Sophocles; but still Anacreon was not only one of the old Greek authors, but one who was honoured above others, by having gained a bishopric for his father's friend, and he sat down in an easy chair, to study him, through the hours that must be passed before dinner.

But before he could arrive at anything like a clear perception of his lordship's critical acumen, the learned author entered the room, arrayed in the awful dignity of lawn sleeves, and crop wig, and accompanied by his lady, with whom, of course, William had been previously acquainted. Mrs. Trochee was short, and thick, and red, and consequently had not a very distinguished appearance; she was, indeed, the daughter of an honest tradesman in the village, which had been Dr. Trochee's first living, paying him eighty pounds a-year. William, however, remembered her to be a good-humoured kind of woman, and was pleased to see her enter the room. As he advanced to shake hands with the lady, his lordship said, with great gravity, "Mrs. Trochee, our friend, Mr. Herbert, has done us the unexpected honour of a visit, which I trust will be a long one; and while I am engaged in the important duties of my station, I trust that our guest will not suffer from my absence. My dear sir, I hope you will overlook the want of ceremony under the circumstances, and feel that you are at home in this house, all the members of which are so gratified by seeing you."

His lordship then quitting the room, William and Mrs. Trochee entered into conversation

on weather, crops, and family ailments, which was shortly interrupted by the entrance of a fair young lady, whom the elder lady introduced as Miss Trochee, her daughter, and asked if Mr. Herbert would like to walk into another room, while the young lady went through her matutinal musical practice, which of course William declined, professing a particular love of music. He had the pleasure of turning the leaves of the music-book, and wondering at her flights up and down the instrument, during half an hour, when he received an invitation from Mrs. Trochee to accompany them on a shopping tour. This, as may be supposed, took up the greater part of the afternoon; since, to say nothing of the charm of shopping in itself, the ladies had now a man of fashion to wait on them, which was not often the case, as the bishop's family contained no young men, and it was not exactly agreeable to the dignity of his lordship's character to perform those little obliging offices which gentlemen are expected to perform in such circumstances.

I may injure Mr. Herbert in the opinion of my lady-readers, perhaps, if I mention a part of his office which he failed to perform; but the truth must be told. Although he had fifty

opportunities for doing it, he did not present the ladies with a single article of all that they examined—he did not even press on the young lady a dozen pair of kid gloves, with the happy compliments which sometimes induce ladies to accept such things. But really he had one excuse for his want of politeness, which I trust will be allowed to have some weight, and it was, that he had no money.

CHAPTER VII.

THE drive home at four, the dressing for dinner, the dinner served at six and eaten by seven, and the withdrawal of the ladies, may be all imagined; but what took place afterwards perhaps the reader, if he be not a very clever fellow, may not be able to guess.

"And you really prefer," said the Bishop to William, handing him a bottle of unsophisticated old John Bull Port,—"you really prefer, my dear sir, the Church to the House of Commons?"

"I do, my lord, certainly," was William's reply; "but that preference will not much recommend me to your lordship's good opinion, when I confess that I have not now the power to choose between them."

"No, sir!" replied Dr. Trochee, with a slight tinge of surprise in his manner. "I should have thought no gentleman in England would have it more in his power. Your family has been so long at Alverley, and has so constantly represented the borough, that there could be no doubt of your being elected by a constituency possessing such constitutional principles."

"I beg pardon, my lord," William replied; "I fear your lordship is not aware that our interest at Alverley ended at my father's death, and that the new proprietor of the Hall will, doubtless, make use of the interest which our family formerly possessed in the borough."

"What!" cried his lordship, putting his glass somewhat hastily on the table, though it must be confessed that it was empty; "do you really mean to say that you are no longer at Alverley?"

"Certainly, my lord. I am very much surprised that your lordship was not aware of it."

"It is strange that I did not know it," said his lordship after a pause of apparent meditation; "I must have forgotten it, I suppose: and really, now I think over the subject again, I have a faint recollection that I have heard it before."

William was surprised and grieved that the death of his father, and the ruin of his family, were matters of such indifference to an old friend —he judged of his lordship by himself or his father; but there was this important difference between them,—his father, though he had been a member of parliament, had taken very little personal interest in politics, beyond listening patiently, and voting conscientiously: the subjects of his dearest interests lay far away from London—the movements of his heart were confined in a narrow circle, which contained only his own family and those within the compass of his own estates, which looked up to him as a pattern: but his lordship was one of the most active partisans in political warfare; and it will not, therefore, be surprising that his passions, constantly excited in public struggles, left little room for the cultivation of the more domestic charities, and could not be very strongly moved by an event of so much less political importance than events of every-day occurrence in the House—as the death of a friend. William Herbert knew not this. He felt that there would have been great sorrow in his father's house for the death of the Bishop, and he was disappointed at the little sympathy he had found; but he was

now in some degree used to misfortune, and bore this fresh sorrow with respectful patience.

"My lord," William replied with great calmness, "I am very sorry that your lordship is unacquainted with the circumstances in which my family is placed by my father's death, as I should have been spared the pain of entering into the particulars."

"Oh, pray do not discuss any subject disagreeable to yourself!" said his lordship.

"I feel obliged by your lordship's kind consideration of my feelings," replied William, "but I must state in general terms the nature of my situation; any particulars beyond my present communication your lordship may be readily furnished with. At present I may say, that on looking into the affairs of our family after my dear father's decease, my mother found it necessary to call the creditors together, and the result was, that when she had paid them all, there was left only sufficient property to purchase a very small annuity, which will just keep her from positive want."

"Well, Sir!" said his lordship, observing that William paused; "and pray what is the object of this communication?"

"I believe, my lord," William replied, "that

when I mention the circumstance, your lordship will recollect that you have formerly done me the honour of examining me in Latin and Greek, and made some flattering remarks on my proficiency."

"I do not recall the circumstance; but, proceed," said the Bishop.

"Apart from all pecuniary considerations," replied William, "my heart is set on becoming a minister of the gospel; but in giving up our property to our creditors, and paying, to the last farthing, every demand against the family, I find myself without the means of prosecuting my studies, and taking up a degree."

"And do you mean to say that you were compelled to give up your estates to your creditors?"

"I might, perhaps, have retained them for a time, my lord," William replied; "but as an honest man, I was bound to consider the actual wants of our creditors before my own wishes. Of the justice of their claims there could be no doubt, and I could not, with a good conscience, detain property from them for prosecuting my own interests."

"I hope, Mr. Herbert," said his lordship,

" that the present proprietor of Alverley maintains the principles of the constitution ?"

" Really, my lord, I am not acquainted with his principles—the estate was sold, I suppose, to the highest bidder; and I am not aware that any inquiries were made as to his politics."

" No !" cried his lordship; " you have been very ill-advised; but, let me see." His lordship then referred to a Parliamentary Register, when, discovering that the present owner of Alverley was a Whig, he exclaimed—" Really, Mr. Herbert, I am pained to see the son of my old friend in a position like yours, and I am sure your conduct will, at some future day, produce the bitterest remorse. Sir, you have put a weapon into the hands of an enemy of the constitution."

" I am sorry," William replied, " that my conduct is not approved by your lordship; but it was improbable that I, as a minister of the gospel, should ever be intimately concerned in politics. A positive duty was on me, to satisfy the demands of creditors; and at such a time all speculative points of political philosophy must give way to the imperative demands of honesty."

" I am sorry that you were not better in-

formed," replied the Bishop; "but pray what is the object of your present visit?"

"I have informed your lordship that I have not the means of prosecuting my studies at the university," replied William. "I would prefer the ministerial office to all other offices the world could offer me, and I trust that neither my life nor my education would disgrace that sacred calling. But, my lord, I am at present shut out from hope, save what I have in you; and, as my father's old and faithful friend, I come to you for assistance."

"Oh!" said his lordship, in an uneasy manner, "I am sorry, Mr. Herbert, that you should have called on me. Really, sir, if you had considered my family, the necessities of my station, and the very small emoluments of my see, you would have known it to be impossible for me to assist you."

"I beg your pardon, my lord—I do not require pecuniary assistance. Your lordship possesses great influence, not only in my own college, but in all the colleges of the university, and a word from you would serve me as effectually as the utmost command of wealth."

"You must excuse me," his lordship replied, in a lofty manner; "you, perhaps, overrate

any little influence which I may possess in our universities; but, at all events, sir, such influence ought to be exerted very carefully; and I could not justify to my own conscience the recommending to any college a person whose conduct I did not perfectly approve, and to whom I could not give the name of friend."

"A friend, my lord!" William began; but he was interrupted by his lordship saying—

"Yes, sir, those are my sentiments. I cannot recommend a man to whom the constitution is not before all other subjects, while you have done all that lay in your power to subvert it, by allowing a Whig to sit for Alverley, and give his aid to the unholy struggle against the glorious church."

"My lord, you mistake me," said William hastily, "Alverley was sold by the executors, certainly with my concurrence, but without my interference; and although our family has always commanded a vote, it is by no means certain that a future possessor will do so, unless he acquire greater property in the borough than we ever had."

"I do not wish, sir, to enter into particulars—my mind is made up. I should advise you not to think of the church, but take to some honest

employment; or, if you persist, I can only say, you must look for no extra favour from the church, whose interests you have neglected. You must trust to the interests of your own connexions."

"Then I fear, my lord, my case is hopeless," William replied, in a tone of despair; "but I care more for my poor mother and sister than myself. I have no relations that could aid me."

"No!—why have you applied to your great-uncle, Lord Berlingham?"

"I have never seen him, my lord."

"Apply to him, then, at once, sir; he is the most likely person to assist you."

"I have no claim on him, my lord."

"No claim on him!—and yet you come to me? You will please yourself, but I repeat, that you ought to apply to him at once."

"With submission, my lord, I would prefer—"

"Prefer! prefer!" cried his lordship, in an exalted voice of wonder; "do I not recommend you to apply to your uncle? But I see how it is," continued the Bishop, as he raised himself heavily from his damask-covered lounging chair—"you are not sufficiently humble, sir—you are proud, sir; but pride will not do for a man who wishes to enter the church.

Humility, sir—humility, is a much more becoming, as well as more useful, virtue. But I —I forgot that I have an engagement for this evening. Will you be so good as to ring the bell?"

William did ring the bell, and when the servant came, the Bishop ordered his carriage to be got ready immediately; and left the room, wishing William a very good night. The young man was not very well acquainted with the manners of the great world, and his present object was to save himself from utter ruin: I trust, therefore, that the reader will not altogether condemn him as a low-spirited fellow, when I confess that he did not immediately leave the house. The Bishop's sudden alteration of manner puzzled him—he could not believe that he had received a final answer, and he sat down, expecting to see his lordship or Mrs. Trochee, to give further explanations; but, after waiting about half an hour, during which the servant entered two or three times, and looked out of the window in a very independent and consequential manner, he inquired whether he could see his lordship again that night, and receiving a direct negative, he left the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

When William Herbert left the episcopal palace, as it was too late to commence his homeward journey, he went to a humble inn in the city, where he slept, or tried to sleep. As soon as daylight shone into his room, he arose, and set out to communicate his disappointment to the only persons in the world that seemed to care for his misfortunes. He had somewhere about thirty miles to walk, and it was a beautiful morning; but the length of his journey gave him no pain, and the beauty of nature no pleasure: his heart was too much occupied with his late disappointment to be influenced by any other subject. All the world seemed to have conspired against him. Even the friends on whom he had most depended for the active

sympathy of assistance, saw his destruction with immovable indifference—he had no friends in all the world. But, yes; he had two friends—he had a mother and a sister, in the truth of whose affection he could depend; and the shuffling hypocrisy of former friends impressed him with a more exalted sense of the beauty, and inestimable value of their love. He longed to be once more with them: and his tale of mortification and frustrated hopes did not slacken his pace. There was something not only very dreadful in the absolute unsuccessfulness of his journey, but there was something ridiculous about the failure after the buoyant assurance of success: but he hastened on to tell it all; he knew that his tale would not create any ludicrous images in the mind of his anxious mother, and that no event in the life of her son, whether it was ludicrous or vicious, could fail to excite her serious sympathy, if it gave him a single emotion of pain.

Thirty miles were a long day's walk for one unused to pedestrian exercise. Railroads had not in those days penetrated to that part of England; and even if they had, he was travelling a way in which they could not have much hastened his journey; by which I mean, not

that he was travelling in by-roads, or cross-country lanes, but that he had no money to pay for riding. His heart, however, bore him up against his bodily fatigue, and, shortly after sunset, he reached the wicket-gate that led through the garden to his mother's cottage.

A faint light glimmered through the diamond panes, and he walked softly to the window to enjoy the peculiar pleasure of looking in unobserved upon dear relations, in their familiar and every-day circumstances. He was somewhat surprised at what he saw. The plough-boy, Wilson, was sitting, with a book in his hand, at the table, on which a candle was burning, and Fanny was evidently teaching him to read, under the eye of her mother, who was sitting in the chimney corner. Mrs. Herbert seemed to enjoy the scene, and William also enjoyed it. Wilson was too or three years older than Fanny; but there seemed nothing indelicate or improper in her office. It was not a man and a woman in equal and familiar intercourse. The superior intellect and cultivation of the young maiden compared with the awkward ignorance of the clown, rendered it impossible to think of their comparative ages; she seemed a woman teaching a child; and no thought of impropriety could

arise in the mind of an observer, any more than from a painting of an angel watching over a man, in which, though the lineaments of the celestial being are those of a woman, the superior innocence and intelligence prevent those thoughts and suspicions which the habits of society render inevitable, when we observe two persons of different sexes meeting on familiar terms in the circumstances of common life.

For a few minutes, William enjoyed the scene; but longing to make one in the family circle, he lifted the latch, walked in, and, in a moment, his mother and sister were in his arms, while the clown, with a kind of natural good taste, took up his book, and shuffled out of the house.

William's tale was soon told, as he had nothing to relate but utter disappointment: his mother's reply was given as soon, since she had no hopes to communicate. She could only advise him to stay at home with her, and trust in Providence. This advice, perhaps, was not very palatable to one who wished to be moving upwards in the world; but on what, except Providence, can a man trust, when his fellows have denied him aid? William did for a while trust, and wait; but to the man of active mind,

a waiting trust becomes the most difficult test of obedience; as he doubts whether Providence will move for him, if he does not first move for himself. William had saved the principal part of his books from the wreck of the family fortune, and in the prosecution of his studies, and the practice of horticulture, he contrived to pass away a few days with some degree of ease; but his contentment soon wore away, and, perhaps the sooner, that he devised a scheme, to be related in due time, by which he believed he could improve his situation, and this generated a hope which made his present mode of life insupportable.

Scarcely a month had elapsed since his visit to the Bishop, when one evening, the members of the family being, as usual gathered together in the chimney-corner, William opened the subject by observing, "I am almost tired of this life, my dear mother."

"I wish you could find suitable employment," she replied; "but what is to be done, my dear boy?"

"Almost anything would be better than this," he said, "for I am not only living on you, but I am wasting my best years, and lessening my chances of doing something beneficial for all of us."

"What are you thinking of, William?" his mother asked. "If I did not know you to be above deceit, I could fancy you a little insincere in saying that you are living on me. On whom should you live, if not on me? I wish it were in my power to make you independent, or to provide for you out of our income; but, at present, you must know that we owe everything to your care. But I am sure, by your manner, that you have formed some determination with which I am not acquainted?"

"Yes, I have; and I think it the only one left me, by which I could test my own unassisted powers to maintain myself. Both of you remember, I dare say, that I tried my hand a good deal at original composition, while at school and college; and that some of my productions were admitted into the Constitutional Magazine, with compliments from the editor. Now, I have thought that, if I were in London, where such works are published, by constant attention I might make my services sufficiently valuable to acquire a livelihood."

"But why not stay here, and write? I should think your mind would be more composed, and fit for study."

"No, no, mother; that would not do. I

must be on the spot. Who knows whether I might not form some acquaintance, or discover some opportunity in that large city, that would enable me to pursue my original destination!"

"And have you, my dear boy, well considered the great perils of this course? Do you reflect that authors have human passions, and that without reputation you must struggle against those that have gained it and have enlisted the sympathies of the nation in their favour? If you appear likely to be successful, jealousy and envy will throw obstacles in your way. I fancy that in authorship, as well as in other occupations, merit alone will not, without great difficulty and delay, be successful against that kind of merit or talent which has gained influence in the world: wealth or patronage spare the adventurer the most laborious and most wearisome part of the struggle; so that, if you look to establish a reputation by unassisted merit, you must be content to work very hard, and wait very long."

"That is true, undoubtedly," William replied; "but as I have no wealth or patronage, and as the employment of my education in the pursuit of literature is the only kind of industry in my power, I must do as well as I can without them.

As for the mere labour, however hard and constant it might be, it would seem light and sweet to me, since I should continually remember I was working for you."

"I thank God, for my children," cried the mother, with a sudden burst of emotion, and embracing them both. "You are all I could wish," she continued. "But, my dear son, before you finally resolve on this step, consider well the dangers of London; to one, like you, unprotected and unknown—and consider the anxious hearts you would leave behind."

"Oh! do not leave us, William," Fanny cried, flinging her arms round his neck.

"I hope you do not apprehend that I should fall into the vices prevalent in large cities," said William, to his mother. "You do not fear that I should give you cause to blush for me?"

"Oh no, my dear; I dare trust you in any temptations. I have the most perfect trust in you. I know that you love us; and you know that we should never raise our heads again, if you were to add shame to our sorrow. But that I cannot fear. I was thinking only of the loneliness and danger of a city to a youth like you unknown. Who is to shield you from

violence, and who to nurse you in sickness? Those are the dangers that I fear."

"But, mother," said William, confidently, "do not suppose that, because I go to London, I therefore go out of your reach and knowledge. My humble and retired mode of life will hardly attract violence; and at the approach of sickness, I can always write, or return to you."

Conversations of this nature passed between the members of the family very frequently, during the next few days, by which William, if he did not convince his mother and sister, accustomed them to the subject, and familiarized them with the thought of separation. He himself grew every hour more impatient to be gone, until at length Mrs. Herbert yielded to her son's repeated requests, and gave a reluctant permission for his departure. As soon as that was obtained, William packed up his books, and, with a very small supply of money, though more than he was willing to take, bade farewell to his beloved relations, and started for the metropolis.



BOOK THE THIRD.



CHAPTER I.

If ever you get into conversation with a Frenchman, in any of the provinces of his native country, be sure that one of the earliest questions asked of you will be respecting La Paris. If you are journeying in the direction of the metropolis, the provincial will say, "Ah! monsieur is going to Paris!" If your road leads away from it, he will remark, "Ah! monsieur has been to Paris!" and a sigh escapes him, full of meaning and tender love; it seems to speak of a pleasure which he has enjoyed, a pleasure which he trusts to enjoy, or a pleasure too sweet and precious to be hoped for by him. Paris is to a Frenchman all that he can imagine of heaven; France itself, the land of glory, is not a word of such power and of such love as

La Paris. The thriving tradesman of the country pays it an annual visit, to sweeten the labours of the rest of the year; the man who has made his fortune starts for Paris, to conclude his days in spending it; the man who has lost his fortune, or never had one, instinctively turns his face towards Paris, as the only place where he can hope to find one. The creator, the treasurer, the arbiter of all that a Frenchman loves—the dance, the concert, the farce—dominoes, cards, billiards—shop-windows, coffee-rooms, promenades—amours, fanfaronnades, conspiracies—Paris can say of France what Le Grand Monarque, Louis Quatorze, said of the constitution—"C'est moi!"

But however delightful all these things are at certain times, as matters of constancy, perhaps, they are suitable rather to that people than to the whole human race; and there are some nations which, instead of considering them of the first importance, would not scruple to call old Madame Lutetia a boasting and frivolous old lady. But suppose steady, grave old London were to take it into her unpretending head to boast, what other city, what other people would doubt her right to a little self-glorification? She would not suppose that, as a creator of

amusements for idle hours, she must be the observed of all observers, nor even as the capital of England, the world's mistress; but looking on the solid interests of all people—the industry, the labours, the business of nations, she might truly say, "I am the world!" But even more than this; she might say that not only is the existing world dependent on her greatness, and the creature of her will, but that she is like the famous mythological egg by which creation was shadowed forth, since in her are generated and matured the embryo destinies of the world yet undeveloped. She wants no walls to keep her honest people in subjection; she wants no walls to keep off the foe; unarmed she stands on the open plain, her name alone rendering useless the patriotism of her children. But woe be to them that should suppose her silence to be the silence of fear or want of preparation! A glance at her wonderful river which connects her with all seas, and by which she controls all seas and all realms, will suffice to satisfy her friends and convince her foes. The myriads of beautiful ships on the broad expanse of that mighty river, are such evidence of quiet and irresistible power, as the present world can behold in no other place, and the

former world never saw. The enormous bulk of her instruments of power are sufficient, without a man, to keep off the enemy as long as the armed walls of Troy; yes, unprotected by a man, her ships would take longer to destroy than any realm in the universe, protected by all its power.

But what shall be said of the citizens of this vast forest of bricks? Did the ancient or the modern world ever see their equals? I speak not of their number, though that exceeds the knowledge of all ages, whatever may be fabled of Nineveh, of Thebes, and of Rome. I speak not of their magnificence, though that throws into the shade the gewgaw of the merchant-princes of Genoa and Venice. I speak of their solid wealth, their power, their greatness; and in those things all the ages of the world dwindle away into insignificance before them. They gather into their storehouses the produce of all lands; they spread over the earth the produce of all lands; their ships penetrate where ship never penetrated before; they carry the wants and the gratifications of civilization into the most barbarous regions; they stimulate and depress, they create and destroy the industry of nations by a stroke of their pen; through them

the spoon of the Birmingham artisan, and the print of the Manchester weaver are used, where never was placed the foot or heard the name of an European. The fame of London extends to regions where the fame of Britain was never known, and the name of a London merchant is honoured by people who have not heard of Britain's monarch.

But how intimately are virtue and religion mingled with this greatness! I speak not of the evidence given by the myriads of spires and towers which direct the thought to heaven. London is illustrious for her charity. Not a street has she which does not offer relief from some accident of humanity. The blind, the dumb, the halt, the maimed, have all their particular asylums, where everything in the power of man is done for them. The child who has no parent finds a home provided by the city; the woman whose husband did not live to see the birth of his child, finds the care of a husband in a charitable institution; the sailor and soldier returning from the victorious battles of their kingdom, find a palace ready to receive them; the thief can find employment and instruction in a penitentiary; the man wounded by a fall from the roof of a palace, or by the

falling in of a hovel, has a bed always ready to receive him; even the wretched prostitute has always the gate of an asylum open to her, in which she may indulge the holiness, and be spared the mortification of penitence. Nor yet only to her own citizens or her own tongue is her benevolence extended — it reaches every corner of the globe, and pervades every part of it. Neither the secret rock, nor the frowning iceberg, the frozen breath of the pole, or the fire of the torrid zone, can keep it back; wherever a keel of British oak can work its way, or the foot of a courageous Briton can penetrate, the spirit of London is breathed by her missionaries, and that spirit is the word of God, and knowledge, and industry, and liberty.

Yes, liberty, the first and last glory of man, London is thy home! There thou standest forth in the unsullied brightness of thy nature. The whip of the master, the sword of the tyrant, reach not to thy shores; the malignant rage of the oppressor may indulge itself in the far-off lands of the world, but it wanes into impotency as it looks onthe queen of the world.

But to descend from these grand considerations to others of a more domestic nature. What place like London for the man that wants

society! Here may he find the noblest in the world; since, throughout the land, whenever a man begins to rise above his fellows, or possesses the qualities necessary to elevation, he directs his steps towards London, as the only place fit for the struggles of his ambition or the testimonials of his success. All skill, all genius, all talent, that the whole land can produce in all the arts and sciences, are drained from the provinces to fill up the glory of London, and take their proper place in that storehouse of wisdom and greatness. But to the man that seeks retirement, what part of the world offers such advantages? The solitude of a country town or a village is notoriety in a small circle, and the retired man has not only to undergo the ceremonious call, and the salutation of every person who has once seen him, but the unremitted observation and supervision of every person in the neighbourhood, from the first suspicions raised by his coming until the libel which surely attends his going. Should he fly to the solitary cruelty of fishing, he will be accosted by the gentleman who sat beside him at church. If he take a book into the depths of a wood, he will meet the person whom he saw at the grocer's a few days back, who will inquire

whether he loves solitude. If he stays at home, every old maid in the place will call to obtain his contributions and acquaintance. But London!—what woods or streams in the whole globe have such solitudes as thy streets and courts! Even the inns and hotels, which in the country are the very fountains of publicity, are, in London, resources for the quiet man; for in them might he live to the age of Methuselah, if he pay his way, without acquiring a single acquaintance besides the waiter. Who at No. 5 knows who lives on the first floor of No. 6? Nobody ever thought of inquiring, and what is the secret of solitude; but that—nobody thinks of inquiring. But if the streets are such solitudes, what are the lanes, and alleys, and courts? Is there any solitude in the world so perfect as that of a fifth-floor garret in a court that opens into an alley, which leads into a lane, which terminates in an obscure street. Imagine the quiet life of the inhabitant of such a place. No dear friend of a week's duration, no passing acquaintance, no forsaken and religious virgin, would ever penetrate his dire abode. There might he exist—labouring, speculating, writing, or thinking—and there might he die, rich or poor, on down or on the boards, and there

might he lie and fade away into a skeleton, and nobody know it, save the landlord when he called for his rent.

But, above all things, London is the place for the unfortunate man of genius. Here he stands in the centre of the civilized world; he offers his genius to his fellow men in the most favourable situation—in the great mart of talent. No longer can the whisper of suspicion, the malignant lie of petty spite, the insinuated calumny of personal hatred, operate against him. He stands, as it were, cleared from all the accidental circumstances of his own nature and position, and addresses himself to the world—a world that never decides with injustice or prejudice.

CHAPTER II.

THOUGHTS somewhat like the above passed through William Herbert's mind as he entered the modern Babylon; and ought, perhaps, to have been called by the technical term used in such circumstances by the novel-writing profession, a mental exclamation, by which is meant an exclamation in which a good deal is thought, and nothing said. The reader, who, knowing the world, judges of William Herbert by this rhapsody, will set him down as a very curious specimen of ignorance, if he has not done so already, by learning that he went to London in the expectation of earning a livelihood by his pen, without a patron, an acquaintance, or a knowledge of the literary manners of our great city. But it must now be said, that

the whole of William's plan was not communicated to his mother, and, consequently, not to the reader. He was not so weak as to suppose that a person of his youth and inexperience could expect a very important result from periodical literature, especially since it has degenerated from the ancient solemnity of moral and theological discussion into the somewhat light and fugitive narrative of humorous adventure and peculiar manners. William had a more important object in view. In the course of his studies he had often been struck with the variety of opinions in the world on the same subject, the heat and acrimony with which they were asserted and disputed, and the universal disunion and ill-feeling consequent on it; and believing that this evil proceeded, in a great measure, from a want of charity and an excess of self-esteem, he fancied that an appeal to the common sense of mankind would turn their heads, if not their minds, and render them, if not of the same way of thinking on all subjects, yet quiet and kind to the persons, and respectful towards the opinions, of such as conscientiously differed from them. Perhaps, if William had thought as much on the probability of effecting the reformation, as on the excellence of the change when effected,

he might not have engaged in the work quite so earnestly; but he was not far from believing, what is by no means the case, that to address an incontrovertible argument to a person involves the necessity of convincing him; and, accordingly, while yet in the university, he had begun to collect materials, to frame chains of reasoning, and to adorn them with the flowers of ancient literature, and made considerable progress in what seems to be the most essential, though frequently it is not the most difficult part of a book—namely, the writing of it. The completion, then, of this great work, which was to eradicate from society its most universal evil, was his principal object in turning his face towards London; but as he had very little money, and, although not of great appetite, was not exactly used to live entirely on hope, the chance that he might starve before reputation and profit could flow in upon him from the work, was provided against by the plan of earning as much money as he could by employing his spare time on the magazines, and living frugally on it until the publication of the great work rendered such remuneration unnecessary. Supposing the plan to be a good one, he was in a situation to carry it out successfully, being capable of long and

incessant application, habitually extremely frugal, and, what was at least of equal importance, favourably known to an editor of a respectable magazine. His first step was fortunate—he secured cheap and comfortable apartments in a situation sufficiently retired for study; his landlady was an honest, respectable woman, the widow of a substantial farmer, who had been dismissed from his farm by his Grace of Nottingham, in consequence of a neglect of the steward in drawing the lease, by which, although the yearly rent was very accurately secured, no covenant was entered into for the use of the tenant's conscience, in consequence of which omission, the yeoman, conceiving that his vote was his own, had done as he liked with it, in giving it to a gentleman who usually sat in the House opposite to all the representatives of his Grace; and, of course, he was dismissed very shortly, with the brand of freedom on his forehead, which was a lasting warning to all other landowners against connexion with him. The disobedience of the tenant was, however, effectually punished; for, deprived of the means of earning his bread by the occupation for which he had been educated, he had been gradually forced, by the pressure of circumstances, from the

region of broad acres into the smoke and filth of the city, where he did not live long, but left a widow to maintain her six children, by the employment of the small remains of his little capital in the precarious occupation of letting lodgings. But, though the farmer will be justly condemned by the reader, that condemnation will not, I trust, be extended to his widow, who was a very honest woman, never meddling with politics. She endeavoured to make William feel as though he were at home, without bothering him from morning till night, and charging him a per centage for her trouble on every article that came into the house for him, which was all that William or his friends could expect from her, and a pretty considerable deal more than the generality of persons are so lucky as to find.

Need I say that he was very happy in his humble rooms? A gentle tailor of seventeen, struck with a first love by the sight of Miss Angelica Tape, a milliner of fifteen—a maiden lady of forty-five, listening to the declaration of an interesting young man of twenty—the mayor of Noodlem opening the letter which conveys his Majesty's wish to make him a knight—the unpurchasable patriot, when a place has been insinuated—have each and all been considered

to doubt the fall of man, and that any kind of misery was ever brought into the world; but, however bright and beautiful may be those moments of existence, they fade away into dim indifference before the raptures of the man who is turning over the pages of his first work, and speculating on its immortality—and its sale.

But, besides this source of happiness, which was inseparable from his circumstances, he had another, by no means of less importance, as it is certainly of much less frequent occurrence—he did obtain employment on a magazine, and received payment for his compositions. He probably looked on this as a matter of course, as in former times his articles had been accepted by the editor of the same work, when he did not look for other reward than the pleasure of seeing himself in print. But there was some little difference between the two cases; for it is by no means an uncommon thing for a young author, whose works have been admired by his friends and complimented by editors, to find his merits somewhat less willingly admitted, when, to the pleasure of receiving praise, he joins the expectation of the more solid satisfaction of pay.

I would not have the reader suppose that William received such considerable sums from his labours

in this department as to enable him to enjoy the expensive pleasures of London, or to make great additions to the comforts of his mother's home. He had been connected with only one magazine—that was published only once a-month—only one article could appear in one publication, and, of course, that one article was not likely to produce very great riches to the author. But what he received, he was contented with; it kept him from want, and from the struggles and altercations with a landlady, which, however humorous in description, would not have been of the character which his habits and temperament had fitted him to engage in. His landlady had no reason to be dissatisfied with her quiet lodger, and, perhaps, in consequence of that fact, she gave him no reason to be dissatisfied with her. He paid his way—a grand thing in humble life—and while he paid it, he laboured cheerfully for the ability to do more. The close confinement, the continual labour, affected him not. Not even the lark—when in early morn of spring he darts from his green covert, and soaring midway between earth and heaven, bursts forth in musical delight, far from the reach of the spoiler—feels his innocent heart fuller of hope and joy, than William, when, aroused from his bed by the

shrill cry of the infant sweep, he left his chamber, which barely contained the little bed, and made it look as though it was straitened for room, and sat himself down to the work which was to be the regeneration of his family. The life of a student is proverbially barren of incident; and, therefore, although every hour that William Herbert spent in the composition of his important work was of exceeding interest to him, I must be excused from entering into a minute detail of the sources of that interest, as it would probably be much less interesting to a reader.

Incessant application during three months completed the work—a work which he could not examine without satisfaction. The style was not less correct and elegant than the compositions which he had seen praised by editors—the argument appeared to be exact—the illustrations were to the point, from authors of ancient and modern times, whose authority could not be disputed—and the conclusions appeared to flow inevitably from the premises. Nothing remained to be added: a fair and unprejudiced perusal of the work would certainly annihilate the acrimony of all parties, and create an universal good-will and brotherhood throughout the

whole family of man—nothing, in short, was wanting to complete the fulfilment of his original intention but—a publisher.

William soon selected a publisher. The magnates of "the Trade" were entirely unknown to him; and he had no friend to introduce or recommend any particular individual, so that he had them all to pick from. He decided on Mr. Folio, the publisher of the magazine in which he wrote, not from anything he knew of his character, or prepossession in his favour, but because he was the publisher of the magazine which had produced money to supply his wants—it seemed a proper mark of respect and gratitude to give that gentleman the benefit of publishing the work in return for the convenient, though not very great emolument, which he had received from him, or what he very erroneously supposed the same thing, from his editor.

On examining his sheets of copy, and taking into consideration the dove-tailing and chapters of mere connexion, which all authors are compelled to manufacture, he could discover nothing wanting to a complete work: he made a fair copy of those pages which bore the blackest evidence of the author's indecision or afterthoughts, and sewing the whole into a tolerably

large volume, set out with it to the establishment of Mr. Folio. The ground floor was a very handsome shop, suitable to the fashionable part of the town in which it was situated; and after waiting a considerable time, while a party of distinguished-looking customers was despatched, he received an elaborate bow from one of the well-dressed gentlemen in attendance, and desired to see Mr. Folio.

"Will you favour me with your card, sir?" was the reply.

William handed his card to the gentleman, who left the shop, but returned in a few seconds, and with the utmost urbanity desired Mr. Herbert to follow him. From the extreme respect which was evident in the manner of his attendant, and the readiness with which he was conducted into the presence of the great Mr. Folio, William almost believed that they must be aware that he was an author. Before he had ascended the stairs, and entered the saloon, he was convinced that such was the case, and greatly delighted was he with the conviction. Not so much that his personal vanity was gratified by it, or that, feeling his own utter poverty, the respectful attentions of a rich man were an omen of good fortune; but that it enforced and illustrated his belief of the general justice of the

world. It seemed right and proper that as authors were the patrons of publishers, and the creators of their fortunes, so they should be treated with respect and gratitude by them.

Perhaps, had he known what was passing in the mind of Mr. Folio when he entered his presence, this opinion might have been somewhat modified, and he might have supposed either that his profession was unknown, or that justice and gratitude were less universal; for that great gentleman's face acquired a dark cloud as soon as it was turned towards the visitor, and, in place of acknowledging his bow, he turned to the shopman with a look of displeasure, and again examined William's card. But the habits of the great man were too courtly to permit him to be any other than smooth and gentle in his personal demeanour; his dignified features relaxed into a faint smile as he invited his visitor to take a seat, and remarked,—

"I have the honour of addressing Mr. Herbert, I presume?"

William bowed, and Mr. Folio continued:—

"Your appearance, sir, caused me no little surprise; for, as you accidentally bear the same name as a gentleman who for some years has done me the honour of selecting me as his publisher, I expected to see him."

The reader must learn that the room in which

the gentleman sat was of very noble dimensions, furnished with the most exquisite elegance, and adorned by a vast assemblage of nic-nacs and ornaments, presented by ladies and gentlemen of the literary world, with whom Mr. Folio had been connected in the course of the last forty years; the portraits of whom by the first artists, and in most gorgeous frames, completely surrounded the room. It seemed rather the bower of some human fairy than the sitting-room of the white-headed old man who occupied it, dignified though he seemed by habit, and well dressed by his tailor. The fact was, that this room was a favourite lounge of the persons of rank connected by authorship with Mr. Folio, and that admission was rather more difficult of attainment than Apsley House to a Whig, or the drawing-room of an attorney in a country town to a tradesman. It will, therefore, not surprise the reader to learn, that although, when Mr. Folio said that he had expected another visitor, he spoke in the softest tone and with the most obliging manner, yet William could not help feeling that there was a kind of reproach in giving him to understand that his reception was owing to accident, and he apologized for being the unwilling cause of Mr. Folio's disappoint-

ment, although he did not blame himself, since the medium of their introduction was his own card, which of course he had a right to use.

"Oh, don't mention it, pray, Mr. Herbert!" said Mr. Folio with his blandest smile; "I am very glad of the accident which has led to our acquaintance, and I will at once take the liberty of intimacy to say, that at about this hour I generally receive a great number of visitors, so that, perhaps, I might be unable to attend so satisfactorily as I might wish to your business, unless you would do me the favour to communicate it at once."

"I have a work here, sir, which I have brought for publication," said William, handing his MS. to Mr. Folio.

"I am greatly obliged to you, sir," said Mr. Folio, "it shall receive my best attention. 'Travels,' I presume?"

"No, sir."

"Oh, Politics?"

"No, sir; it is an Essay on a very important branch of morals."

"Indeed! morals!—a very important, though, perhaps, not very popular subject. If I might be allowed to judge, sir, I should say that this is a first work."

"Yes, sir; so far as regards the size. It is the first Volume, although I have published shorter works in Magazines."

"Yes, sir, I understand. Excuse the freedom of my questions, and impute it to the rather unusual manner of our introduction. May I inquire if you belong to the Herberts of ——?"

"I do not," was the reply.

"Perhaps to the Herberts of ——?"

"No, sir; my father lived at Alverley, in Gloucestershire."

"You will excuse my freedom," said Mr. Folio; "but you must be, of course, aware of the impossibility of deciding on your work, unless somewhat of the author's family be known."

"I should have thought a perusal of the work would have been more important," said William.

"Why, I believe that is the case with some houses in the city," replied Mr. Folio; "but, of course, it is very different here; and I could not think of engaging in a work unless the author's name were known to the fashionable world, or his station in life could appear in the title-page."

"I have no station," William answered; "and

my name is certainly not known to the fashionable world."

"Perhaps, sir, as a matter of business, you know, you will allow me to suggest that some part of your family may be known to the fashionable world."

"Lord Berlingham, I believe, is well known in the circles of London; and my father was many years member for Alverley. But I am not acquainted with Lord Berlingham; my father is dead; and there is no person of rank that I have the right to claim acquaintance with."

"Oh, my dear sir, that will do very well: I should think that we could dispose of an edition of a work by the 'nephew of a Peer, and the son of an ex-M.P.'"

"Excuse me, sir, I have no right to use Lord Berlingham's name; and I do not see what additional weight a work on Morals would receive from a nobleman's name on the title-page."

"The morals might not, but the sale would undoubtedly be aided by a striking name; perhaps you could mention, if not a relative, yet a friend, whose name might aid the work."

"I don't know," said William; "I am slightly acquainted with Mr. Slasher."

"I am afraid his name would be of no use," said Mr. Folio, with a smile.

"I mean Mr. Slasher, the Editor of the 'Constitutional Magazine,' in which a series of articles of my composition have appeared, under the signature of 'Tyro.'"

"Perhaps so, sir; but I never read the 'Constitutional.'"

"No, sir! Why I have committed an egregious blunder; for I really supposed you were the publisher of it."

"You were right, sir; I am the publisher, and owner of that work; but I leave all the details of it to Mr. Slasher, without any control over his selection of authors, and, as I say, without reading the work, which I am told is a very able one. But Mr. Slasher's name, though he is an useful editor, on a title-page would do nothing for your work besides adding to the expense of getting it up."

"I know of no other person whose name I could give you; but, if you will allow me, I would just say, that if you would take the trouble to peruse the work,or entrust it to a person of judgment and learning, I should expect a greater measure of success than through the highest patronage."

"Oh, very well, sir; as you please. If you will be so kind as to leave the manuscript, and your address, I will take care that immediate attention is paid to it; and will communicate the result at the very earliest period. Good morning, sir."

The last sentence was a dismissal given to William, as it appeared, in consequence of the appearance of two single young gentlemen, announced as the Honourable Mr. Rhymer and Sir Robert Dearbred, the former of whom had published three volumes of Poetry, very popular among the unmarried ladies of rank, and the latter had just sent forth a large and very heavy work, in which he proved, to the satisfaction of every Tory landlord in the realm, that the comfort, honour, and safety of Great Britain, were owing to the people giving twice as much for their corn as it was worth. Mr. Folio arose with great alacrity to receive his distinguished visitors, when William walked away.

He mused as he went. He could not rightly comprehend the reason for putting any name on a title-page besides that of the author; or how a work on morals could be improved by public knowledge of the fact that it was written by the nephew of a nobleman, and the son of an

ex-M.P. But, on the whole, he left Mr. Folio, highly delighted with his reception. All things went well with him. Providence seemed to have taken compassion lately on his circumstances. He had earned some pounds on the "Magazine;" he had been enabled to work rapidly and well on his "Universal Charity;" he had found a publisher of great celebrity who would read his work at once; the vessel of his fortunes, which had laboured and rocked so fearfully, was now righting, and bending towards a harbour where everything would be serene. There was but one thing to make his happiness incomplete. Were his father but alive to be pleased with his work!—how delighted he would have been to dedicate it to him!

Being arrived at this important point in his literary career, and having obtained, perhaps, the groundwork of his fortune, he longed to communicate his circumstances to those beloved ones whom Providence had left to him, and whose smile must ever be the sweetest and best reward of his labours and care. It would not be proper, however, to leave London just now, when, probably, Mr. Folio would wish to see him, and would, at all events, send to his apartments: it would be best to wait for a reply.

He waited for about a fortnight, when, not hearing from Mr. Folio, of course he fancied that the importance of his work had led to this pretty long consideration of it; and decided on going down to Alverley, and give all the time necessary for a consideration of the work, after he had left that address with Mr. Folio. As soon as he had formed this determination, he called at Mr. Folio's shop, and sent up his card: but unfortunately the gentleman was engaged, as he was at two other times when William called. He then sent a note, requesting Mr. Folio to send any communications he might wish to make to him, addressed to Alverley; and after three days he received the following letter:—

"Sir, I am desired by Mr. Folio to thank you for the offer of your work, which is now under consideration, and the result will be communicated to you without delay, according to your address. I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

"Timothy Scribble."

How satisfactory!—nothing could be better! Three weeks had been spent over his work. It must be undergoing a rigorous examination, which was what he most required. He did not doubt that an unprejudiced mind must see the

truth of the principles he had laid down; he looked forward to success in life as a certainty after the success of his first essay at literary labours; and thanked the good fortune which had at first directed him to Mr. Folio's. Such were his thoughts while he journeyed once more towards Burnside.

CHAPTER III.

WHILE William Herbert had been labouring on the work which was to make such a change in his fortune, the beloved relatives whom he had left at Burnside had spent their time, as might be expected, without any adventures worthy of particular relation. The continued caution, the minute economy, the petty contrivances of an honest woman reduced from the expenditure of thousands to that of fifty pounds per annum, though exquisitely interesting to herself, and occupying the greater part of her time, would have but little interest for the general reader; since narrations of this kind are not commonly expected to contain a treatise on domestic economy. The only two kinds of relaxation from household labour for Mrs. Herbert, were

the superintending of her daughter's education, and doing what she could for the young ploughman formerly mentioned. As Mrs. Herbert had insisted on William's keeping back his books from the sale of their property, so he had insisted on keeping back Fanny's musical instruments and books, that she might be certain of having the power to complete her education. In those accomplishments essential to the educated lady, Mrs. Herbert had carefully instructed her daughter, and the employment of the pencil and the piano now formed a most pleasant exchange for the more constant and vulgar exercise of their hands and heads; and when it is stated that Fanny's progress was in proportion to her mother's care, perhaps the reader will consider that nothing more need be said on it, but will be content without a detail of the system on which Mrs. Herbert taught the sciences.

But a little more must be said respecting her other pupil. The present education of Miss Herbert was merely developing the accomplished woman from the well-trained girl; but the education of the ploughboy was creating a man out of a mere clod of the field. Young Wilson, when Mrs. Herbert became acquainted with him, was, as is previously stated, entirely un-

acquainted with the first rudiments of learning: he was, therefore, not impressed with a love of knowledge from experience of its excellence, and was not aware that it could ever be of benefit to him: he was without the two most important incentives to study. But his respect for the ladies of the Hall was profound, and as he could not but feel how highly they valued learning, the consciousness that they wished him to study, awakened the desire. It was a sad piece of work to master the alphabet. The mere sounds, in their common order, he could have learned by rote in a few hours; for his memory was exceedingly ready, from having all his life trusted to it without the aid of pen and ink; but the art of attaching to the various characters their particular sounds, was a work of much time and pains, without any pleasure, because it contained no ideas. But steady perseverance, encouraged by the praise of his respected teacher, mastered this; and the next step was easier, for when he entered on the abstruse art of combining these primitive and unmeaning sounds into words familiar to his ear, his mind was employed as well as his memory; at the plough, or by his own fire-side, he could think of what he was learning; a per-

ception of the beauty of the art awoke in his mind, and he became not only eager to learn, but no earthly power could have stopped the current of thought and knowledge pouring in on his awakening faculties. Books suited to his capacity he eagerly devoured, and rapidly he mastered those which seemed a little above it; nor was the pleasure of progress confined to himself, for Mrs. Herbert was proud of the intellect she was developing in one who otherwise might have gone through life like a beast of the field; and, perhaps, she had never experienced a pleasure more unmixed with a selfish feeling than when, one Sunday afternoon, she called at old Mrs. Wilson's cottage, and found her listening to the New Testament, read to her by her grandson.

Nor was the young man's progress limited to reading; for as soon as he had acquired the alphabet, Mrs. Herbert put a pen in his hand, and taught him the elements of writing and arithmetic. The labour of the day was, however, sadly against an elegant use of the pen; the clumsy fingers, and toil-worn limbs, could with difficulty acquire the repose necessary to writing; but, in arithmetic, the young man's progress was very rapid. The reader who is acquainted with

our ignorant agricultural population, will have been astonished at the readiness of calculation which they acquire. Compelled to examine accounts, and calculate sums of money without the aid of written characters, they acquire a facility in working the simpler problems of arithmetic, which often leaves behind the more learned calculators with the pen. It was so with young Wilson: he had all his life trusted to mental arithmetic; and now, when the four primitive rules were made plain to his understanding, a very little practice sufficed to make him expert. It was a pleasant thing for a person of virtuous and enlightened sentiment to feel that she had been the author of such a change; and, however humble, she might have felt that she had been to him not less a deity than even He who had created him, since she had not only wrought a thorough transformation in his mind, but produced a mind where all the materials of such a work seemed wanting; and she, humble as she was, felt pleased that she had been enabled to call into action the organs of intellect which otherwise had never been discovered, and make a reasonable man of one who seemed fated to live and die but one degree above the brutes of the field.

But let not the reader suppose that the whole

of the change has been described, or that it was possible so great a transformation could be worked in the mind—the nobler part of a man—without leaving its impress on the body. The newly-awakened love of knowledge and reverence for his teachers, created by their former and present benefits, and strengthened by the feeling that they were the depositaries of a vast amount of that knowledge which he hoped to gain, combined to inspire a wish to imitate them as much as possible in those points wherein he discovered that they differed from himself. Mrs. Herbert's children had, at first, been amused at the unsophisticated evidence which his hands conveyed of the nature of his labour—by which I mean, that he was not aware of the blessing of frequent ablutions; but this proof of ignorance soon ceased to exist, and the young man's hands, though rather too large and too rough to be adduced in proof of an aristocratic origin, for cleanliness would have put to shame the political hands of many of our most celebrated aristocratic governors. The next bad habit corrected was one which the reader will have noticed—that of speaking abruptly, without nice selection of words, and without a thought as to whether any other person were speaking.

The young man soon felt the charm of the patient listening, and the quiet and gentle reply, of the Herberts; and unconsciously, by the mere force of example, fell into something like the same manner of conversation. Probably, if it had been in his power, he would have marked by his dress, the difference between the youth of utter ignorance and the youth of growing knowledge; but learning had as yet been productive of no blessings, saving those which were mental. No extra portion of wealth flowed into his pocket, and the incessant labour of the day barely sufficed to supply the daily necessaries. Yet, in spite of his wretched garments, there was a change wrought in the visible man; the slouching gait was exchanged for the upright step of a thinking being; and the eyes that had formerly been dull and sheepish, now acquired a fearless and inquisitive glance of intellect. Ovid's celebrated lines might be paraphrased in application to him, and it might be said that the power which had quickened and fed the organs of intellect, had exchanged the brutish downward look for the glance towards the heavens, which are the origin of thought, and to which the noblest intellect has ever been and ever must be directed.

The change just described had been so gradual, that perhaps the Herberts did not perceive it in such a way as to remark on it, although, undoubtedly, their behaviour to the young man was unconsciously, in some degree, altered in consequence of it. But when William Herbert, after an absence of a few months, visited them, and was forcibly struck with the change, it was necessarily the subject of conversation. To William, the alteration in the young man suggested merely a few pleasant remarks; his habits of thought had not prepared him to look on the subject as one of much importance; perhaps, no one but a mother, and an English mother, could do justice to its importance. But Mrs. Herbert was a mother anxious and thoughtful; she was thankful that her own children possessed the inestimable blessing of a sound education; and the beautiful sympathies created by her happy maternity extended further than her own children, and compelled her to rejoice in being able to bring the child of a more unfortunate mother into participation of the blessings enjoyed by her own children. William had much to tell his dear relatives after his long absence in London; not, perhaps, of romantic adventures; not of struggles with

ruffians, and triumphs over dangers which seemed picturesque in the retrospect; nor of persons and manners which would interest the great world, from the contrast with those which daily come under the eye; the adventures had little in themselves worthy of relation, but those to whom he related them loved him, and could be interested in the slightest incidents in which he had been concerned; and the smallest of his adventures, and of his hopes and fears, were attended to with the interest with which love invests the meanest circumstance relating to its object. That was a very happy time. The renewal of the intimate intercourse of the three near relatives, who had nothing in the world besides to love, was very sweet. The morning and the evening walk, and the chimney-corner, when the daylight had passed away, were all full of delicious feeling; even the brilliant hopes of young authorship would have appeared dim before it, if they had not been mixed up with the present enjoyment, and had not looked forward to their sweetest fruits in securing and giving another charm to the fire-side comforts.

It may be supposed, that in this time of hope and happiness, William's pen was running rapidly, and successfully; but that was not the

case: he could not put pen to paper until he knew how his work was received by the publisher. This anxiety, which every modest author has felt, from the time he put his first work into the hands of a publisher, until he receives a reply, took from him the power of continued thought and study, and a walk in the fields, labour in the garden, and a little instruction to his master in agriculture, (the ploughboy,) were the only modes of spending time agreeable to his anxious mind.

But the anxiety was very pleasant, followed as it was to be—if not by fame and fortune, yet by such a measure of success as would enable him to accomplish the dearest wishes of his heart —to introduce himself to the sacred and delightful office of a Christian minister, and secure his two relatives from want. Indulging this delightful hope, whose beauty was undimmed by any cloud, the days passed away quickly and happily.

He had calculated the time which his manuscript would probably take in perusal; and a certain confidence in his own powers, as it assured him of a good reception from the publisher, probably was the cause of his contentment. As the time approached, which he had

fixed on for receiving a reply, he grew, as was to be expected, somewhat anxious—he could hardly make up his mind whether it would be better to dispose at once of the copyright, or to accept a certain proportion of the profits as they accrued. If he disposed at once of the copyright, he should, of course, receive a considerable sum of money—enough to enable him to renew his studies at the university; but, undoubtedly, less than the aggregate sums derived from retaining the copyright, but his pecuniary interest in the work would cease for ever. If he retained the copyright, with a division of profit, he should of course derive very little from a first edition, the profits being, in a great measure, swallowed up by the expense of stereotyping, &c. But then the profits of the next, and all future editions, would be so considerable as to very much exceed the sum which could be expected to be offered for the absolute surrender of the copyright. There was, unquestionably, a great convenience in possessing a large sum of money; yet, in his case, as the payments from the different editions would be so much greater than could be derived from an immediate sale of the copyright, their being made, as it were, in the form

of an annuity, would probably be not inconvenient. Speculating long and carefully on this knotty and important point, which was to be decided when the publisher's letter reached him, the advantages on both sides seemed so equal, that he was unable to form a settled determination.

He needed not, however, to have taken this subject into consideration so soon: in fact, a good deal of useful anxiety and consideration were thrown away, for not only did he not form a final determination on the subject, but if he had done so, it would not have been of very great importance, because, in short, when the time for receiving a letter arrived, the letter did not come. Now, as William's speculations had been exclusively concerning the reply to be given to the letter, of course he had not taken into his calculations the possible circumstance that he might not receive a letter, so that he had to begin his speculations afresh. Yet what more common in this world of casualties than a letter not forthcoming when expected! Mr Folio might have had an accident in his person —might have had a misfortune in his family— might have been compelled to take a long journey—might have written and accidentally

mislaid the letter—or, though it seemed not very possible, nor indeed very pleasant to suppose it, he might even have had other correspondents, to whom he was compelled to write, and could not yet find leisure to write to him. If William estimated, as authors generally do, a publisher's interest in their work by their own idea of its merits, he could not fully believe that any business could be of sufficient importance to prevent his receiving a letter, and some other considerations rendered very unpalatable the thought that anything besides an accident had prevented his receiving a letter from Mr. Folio.

It has been related, that when William resolved on a journey to London, he did not acquaint his friends with the whole of his plans, but omitted in his relation the mention of his proposed work. The deliciousness of a surprise had then struck his mind, and through the many months spent on it, he looked for the moment when he could declare to his dear relatives the existence of a work which would secure him a reputation calculated to make them proud of him, and discover a road to fortune, which would be so sweet for their sakes. But when he returned from London, after completing the work, but a very few minutes

had elapsed before he had communicated what he had hitherto concealed, received their congratulations, and been a witness to their hopes; and of course it must be a most bitter mortification to be immediately disappointed in what he had been so confident in only a few days before. William took care that the little shopkeeper down the village, who kept the post-office, should have little trouble with his letters, for he was at his shop every morning as soon as the shutters were down; but, alack! a week passed away, and then another, without bringing a letter for him, and he felt the necessity of writing again to ascertain whether any accident had occurred. When he had waited yet another week without reply, he became alarmed with the presentiment of some fatal disaster, such as the death or bankruptcy of Mr. Folio, or a general destruction by fire of the great Babylon, and he hurried back to London with much less confidence than he had brought from it.

CHAPTER IV.

WILLIAM's anxiety on account of his work was now greater than even at first. He had been compelled to notice the constant contrivances and the thousand shifts by which his mother was barely enabled to live; but even their very narrow income was materially lessened by a circumstance which was become inevitable. Mrs. Herbert, in her richer days, had been a beneficent patroness to the poor; and now, when she was poor, she could not throw off wholly the most exquisite privilege and faculty of high station—that of doing good. Perhaps the continued respect with which she was treated by those whom she had formerly befriended, assisted in keeping up this remnant of their former relationship; in her circum-

stances, perhaps it was wrong to give anything out of her own poor family, but there was a feeling in William's bosom which would not suffer him to blame her. But he determined, long before he reached London, that he would never again be a burden to his mother—that his wants should not stop her charities, and make her feel the bitterest part of poverty. He was resolved never to return until he could bear with him the assurance of a steady fortune.

But as he approached the metropolis, he was not struck with any prominent change in its appearance since he had left it, save that it looked much larger. No conflagration had taken place; the French had not landed; something, which his fears had not suggested, must have happened to delay the expected letter from Mr. Folio. As soon as he had called on his old landlady, and seen that his books were safe, he set out for the residence of that gentleman. His heart failed as he drew nigh to the house. The polite old gentleman perhaps was dead, or had suffered some severe domestic misfortuné, or had failed in business. William dreaded to thrust himself and his cares into the scenes of distress which his imagination had conjured up. But one thought emboldened him: perhaps Mr. Folio

had been compelled to leave London for some distant part, and had thus been prevented from fulfilling his promise. He entered the shop. There were no signs of distress. The gentlemen behind the counter were the same that he had seen before; not one of them seemed like a bum-bailiff; everything bore the appearance of prosperity. He addressed himself to one of the gentlemen, and was informed, as before, that Mr. Folio was at home, but on sending up his card, learned that he was particularly engaged at that moment. He called the next day with the same result, when he wrote a letter to Mr. Folio, requesting his proposition for the work submitted to him at his earliest convenience; and in the course of a week a porter brought him a packet, which, on opening, he found contained his MS. and the following letter:—

"Sir,—Mr. Folio desires me to present his respectful compliments to you, and to say that, after a careful perusal of your work, he regrets that he has not been recommended to undertake its publication.

"I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

"ANTHONY SCRIBBLE."

This letter effectually terminated the pleasing visions which William had enjoyed for the last six months. In his calculations of the results of authorship he had not taken into consideration the somewhat important fact, that he might find difficulties with publishers; and he had to commence his calculations afresh. But they had a different bearing now. He no longer debated in his mind the separate advantages of retaining and of disposing of his copyright. The work had been rejected without a discussion of terms; something in the work itself had caused its rejection; and he read it over carefully to discover where lay the fault. But he could discover nothing that would give offence, or which he feared to subject to the severest criticism: the object of the work was good, and the execution of it not bad, and he determined to find a publisher. He was willing to trust to the merits of his composition, and he had the strongest of all reasons for doing so—namely, that he had nothing besides to trust to.

The next publisher he called on, after retaining the MS. about a week, very much admired it, and unwillingly declined to publish it. In his arguments, William, alluding to Protestants and Catholics, had claimed

for both the exercise of an equal charity founded on the same grounds—namely, of justice, which was putting them both on a level; and Mr. Twaddle could never suffer such a sentiment to appear in a work published by his house. If Mr. Herbert would just write the work over again, and modify his opinions on certain points, so as to exclude the Catholics, the work should have Mr. Twaddle's renewed consideration. This was destructive of William's intentions, and he declined Mr. Twaddle's advice.

The next gentleman looked at the title, and read a dozen lines, when he informed William that he never did business with things of that sort, but probably, if he were to abridge it considerably, Mr. Lankair, the sermon-publisher, would look at it. William took his work without abridgment, to Mr. Lankair, a melancholy-looking gentleman, with a dirty white cravat. But when Mr. Lankair saw that there was no text at the commencement of the treatise, and that the body of the work was not filled with the chapter and verse of Scripture references, he shook his head, and said it would not suit him. But Mr. Lankair did not send William away without hope; for seeing that he looked rather blank at this continued want of

success, he told him if he would try his hand at some remarkable conversions, or the memoirs of pious pastors of the Wesleyan persuasion, he would find it worth his while, as a good deal of money was making at it. This offer did not suit William, as his knowledge of pious Methodist parsons was exceedingly confined; but Mr. Lankair informed him, that by looking at their Magazine every month, he could see who were dead, and by applying to the relatives of the departed, he could always be provided with sufficient letters to fill a volume or two, without much trouble, besides that of correcting the spelling, and altering the grammar to a proper condition for print. This advice was not palatable to his hearer; he wished Mr. Lankair a good evening, and left him.

His confidence in his own abilities began to give way under this continued want of success. Even his self-respect seemed to be compromised by hawking his production from house to house through the publishing world, to be continually rejected. It seemed unworthy a man of talent to make such humiliating efforts to convey its results to the general mind. He began to speculate on the propriety of locking up his manuscript in his box, and looking out for other kind of em-

ployment. But a decision of so much importance was not to be formed lightly. So many sweet hopes had arisen from the composition of the work, and the world seemed so entirely without a motive for assisting him, save this evidence of his worthiness of support, that he could not at once throw it aside, and enter into a struggle with the world, the nature of which his habits had not enabled him to comprehend, and probably had not gifted him with any of the instruments or qualities necessary to success. After a patient examination of his prospects, and his chances of escape from absolute starvation, he decided on another application to publishers.

The first to whom he applied would have nothing to do with his work; but said, on reading it, that he had very good language, and talent for argument, and if Mr. Herbert would write a pamphlet against reform, he would undertake it. The second admired the sentiments, but said that nobody ever read anything besides novels and travels: perhaps Mr. Herbert would convey the arguments and general substance of his work in the form of a novel, when he would be happy to undertake it, if it were performed satisfactorily. The third said he would with great pleasure

embark in the work at once, provided Mr. Herbert would find securities for payment of expenses. Alack! it seemed that the further he went, the worse he fared. This last reply determined him against another application to a publisher.

He had still continued his connexion with Mr. Slasher, of the "Constitutional Magazine;" and, as a last resource, sent the MS. to him, requesting an early and candid perusal, and criticism on it; and suggested that if Mr. Slasher approved of the work, which by the way he little doubted, perhaps he would recommend him to a publisher. Mr. Slasher was a well-known name in literature, and from editing so conspicuous a work as the "Constitutional," must be a man of great powers of mind; and he was the very kind of character to whom William most wished to submit his work. In the course of ten days after sending the work, William received it back with the following letter:—

"Dear Sir,—I beg to return my thanks for the perusal of your excellent work, and I wish I could give you hopes of its success. There is one point in your subject which has been fatal to many excellent works of the kind,

and that is, its inapplicability to the actual state of things. I am sure you will see that to carry out your principles in any considerable degree, party spirit, both in politics and in religion, must be greatly modified, since you would have the Tory be tolerant towards the Whig, and the Whig charitable towards the Tory; you would have the papist friendly towards the churchman, and the churchman gentle towards the papist; and the dissenter respectful towards both, and respected by both. The state of things which you so eloquently advocate would undoubtedly greatly conduce to the general harmony of society; but where, save in Utopia, is it to be looked for? The very reverse is the fact. You may depend on it, your book will be greatly admired by those few readers who, living in perfect retirement and without passions, belong to no party, and therefore require not such a work; but for every one of that kind there are ten thousand, who, if they saw your admonition to be sociable with those who differed from them in opinion would consider you guilty of absurdity or insult, and lay your book aside. A work, to be received, must be applicable to the state of society, which is the very reverse of yours; and though I much admire the style and

arguments, and the various learning which you have brought to bear on the subject, I could not conscientiously recommend a publisher to treat with you for the MS., because I do not believe it would be well received, nor do I believe any one would undertake it unless you guaranteed the expenses, which would be somewhere about two or three hundred pounds. I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

"ARTHUR SLASHER."

Two or three hundred pounds!—and the whole of his property consisted of very much less than as many shillings! What a comforting reply to a man, whose dependence was on the profit of his book, to be told that it would be a failure, but that he might see himself in print at an expense of two hundred pounds! He did not see what seemed probable, that the critic might be playing with his anxiety; for, really, what man would write a treatise on morals who had in his pocket two or three hundred pounds!

But though William was much disheartened by this letter, he was by no means satisfied that the judgment was correct. It seemed to the critic, that because an evil was prevalent, an attempt to stop it must be useless. The very

reason why he wrote the book was a reason why it ought not to have been written; and a book must be written in vain, unless it be concerning evils which did not exist, or which did not require correction. The very magnitude of the evil was a reason why it would continue. He did not see that both the critic and himself were correct—they each had truth on his side: but William's was the truth of abstract and pure reason, while the critic's was the truth of observation and of human nature. And was not a truth of pure reason superior to the truth of custom? Was it not nobler to address men as beings capable of almost angelic greatness, than as creatures wallowing in vice and folly? Was it not a loftier aim to endeavour to create a universal philanthropy and loving gentleness, than to rouse the prejudices and passions to war against prejudices and passions perhaps not less vile? Yes, this was all true; but there was another point to be considered—William was in want of bread, and could he hope to obtain it by attacking the prejudices and irrational passions of his fellow-men who had the bread to bestow? He began to doubt whether he had chosen well. He had written his work in love; not only without personality, but without the semblance

of an attack on either an individual or a body; and his object had been to draw men closer to each other by a bond of love. But he had forgotten that mankind must acquire a teachable disposition before his lessons would be of service; and that not only was the beauty of charity unperceived by the uncharitable, but that the admonitions to be charitable sounded to them like reproaches; he was constrained to admit that, perhaps, the publishers knew the world better than he did, and that it was useless to address people in any manner on a subject which did not appeal to their sympathies. But disappointed as William was with the result of his authorship, he had not yet endured the worst and crowning misfortune—he had not wanted bread.

The sum of money he had brought to London when he first came, with what he had earned, had sufficed to supply his few wants; and, supposing the latter source of money to continue, had left him the power to linger on a few months longer, until something should turn up. But when the next Number of the "Constitutional" appeared, among the notices to correspondents a reference was made to an article furnished by William, which had been postponed in conse-

quence of a press of political matter, the consequence of which was, that his services were not required for the ensuing month. Now, then, starvation stared him in the face; and very horrible were her features. This was the most terrible blow of all—the inability to publish his work was an evil of only a comparative degree, though certainly of no small amount; if it destroyed his hopes of completing his education, it left him the means of procuring food, while he should be struggling for a more assured provision. It was, perhaps, only a theoretical evil, in inflicting a rebuke to the pride of authorship, and dispelling hopes which he had not any reasonable ground to form; but this was a practical and insurmountable evil; there was no hope with this; there was nothing left behind, on which hope could erect a temple or a hovel; it was no longer a question of delay, and patience, and waiting for future opportunities: fate, in this stroke, had threatened the last and most terrible horror of human nature—the crisis at which all temporizing, all passions, and perhaps all virtues give way—the want of food.

CHAPTER V.

About six months after young Wilson began to receive instructions from the Herberts, and a few days after William left the second time for London, the old grandmother came up to the cottage in a great bustle, accompanied by a staid, respectable-looking man, and immediately began to mutter something about Tom; but though it evidently was of importance, the old woman, either through stupidity or agitation, was unable to communicate it. As soon, however, as the visitors had accepted the offered seats, the gentleman, who seemed a very quaint, methodical, matter-of-fact kind of man, put the subject of his visit in a very plain light.

"My name, ma'am, is John Brown," said he, "and I am principal warehouseman in the house

of Messrs. Jonas Wilson and Co., Merchants, Wapping, as I have already explained to this good woman."

"Ees, so you have," quoth Dame Hobson, "but just tell her honour; she'll know all about it better than me."

"Well, ma'am, the business of my present journey is this:—You must know that about nineteen years ago, my master's son married a girl that was housemaid at the private house at Islington."

"Ah! that was our Jenny," said the old woman.

"Bless me," cried Mr. Brown, "let me speak, or do you—never do business if two talk together. My master's son was a lad of a good, kind disposition, but somehow he did not take to books—that is, the books of our counting-house; for as to other books he was fond enough, and too fond of them. In fact, ma'am, he was spoiled by living away from the wharf, at the private house, and the end of it was, that as Mr. Wilson had a very pretty servant girl——"

"That was my poor Jenny," said Mrs. Hobson.

"At length, Mr. Thomas fell in love with her, and when he informed Mr. Jonas, his father, of that circumstance, the girl was turned away, and

very shortly after Mr. Thomas left also, and, as we heard afterwards, very imprudently married the girl."

"Ah, so he did, poor man!" said Mrs. Hobson, in tears.

"Now Mr. Jonas, my master, is a very strict man, and one that has always liked to be obeyed; and of course was very angry that his son had disobeyed him, especially as he had an idea of marrying him to an eminent sugar-refiner's daughter in Whitechapel, who was worth his hundred thousand. But that couldn't be now, of course, which made worse of the matter; and as Mr. Jonas had refused consent to the marriage, it was not likely he would forgive him afterwards for marrying directly against his will. Accordingly, though we have reason to know that the son wrote and called several times——"

"Ay, that he did!" said the old woman.

"Mr. Jonas, of course, would not see him," continued Mr. Brown, "and after a very few years we heard that Mr. Thomas was dead."

"'Twas only two years," said Mrs. Hobson.

"There were several in our counting-house who liked Master Thomas," continued Mr. Brown; "but nobody dared ask a question of Mr. Jonas Wilson; and perhaps the subject

would not have been brought up again, but that within the last year Mr. Jonas has had an attack of paralysis, which has occasionally laid him up and makes him very weak; and somehow, though he has a lot of us old servants round him who would do anything for him, he seems to want a relation of some kind, and he hasn't one in all London, I believe. It seems to have been running in his head a good while; and at last he sent me down here to see if his son did not leave a child behind him."

"That's our Tom, sure," said the old woman.

"It is rather curious how he should recollect," continued Mr. Brown; "but Mr. Jonas Wilson has a wonderful memory; he sent me down to this village, with orders to call on Mr. Markwell, the clergyman, and ascertain as quietly as possible everything concerning his son's child. He knew there was one, but was not certain whether it was a boy or girl; but whichever it was I was to bring the child to London. The clergyman directed me to this good woman, and if, as I suppose, I am right, I hope you will let the business be despatched as soon as possible, as I shall be missed in the warehouse."

"And is all this true?" asked Mrs. Herbert of the old woman.

"Ay, that it is," was the reply; "and it would have done your heart good to have seen how fond my poor girl and her husband were of one another. I was proud at first that my daughter married such a nice gentleman. But that didn't last long; for when his father turned him off, he had nothing to live on but the little money that he raised at first to marry with. He tried to work along with my old man, but he hadn't been used to it, and was soon knocked up; then he set up a school, but it didn't answer, and he fretted and fretted, and at last went off in a consumption. Then our Jenny came back to us, with her child, which is our Tom; but she wasn't like the same girl then. Mayhap she thought she was going to live like a lady, as, indeed, her husband wouldn't let her do anything; but, however, she was a poor thing now, always low-spirited, and growing thinner, till at last my old man caught a fever and died, and poor Jenny died a week or two after, and Tommy and I were left to shift as we could, which, God knows, was hard work, until your ladyship was so kind to us, and Tom growed up big enough to yearn summut in the fields."

"Pray, Mr. Brown," said Mrs. Herbert, "was

Mr. Wilson unacquainted with the extreme poverty in which his son had left his child?"

"I can't say, really, ma'am," replied Mr. Brown; "but I should think he was acquainted with it, for Mr. Jonas Wilson was the best man of business in London—nothing escaped him that he ought to know."

"And so you really think he knew of this distress, and refused to alleviate it, even when his unfortunate son—the only person who could possibly have offended him—was dead?"

"Why, ma'am, Mr. Jonas Wilson is a very extraordinary man; he does everything on principle. It's of no use trying to persuade him when his mind's made up, I assure you; not the least. And as for charity, I don't suppose he ever gave away a farthing in all his life, although I'll engage no man pays his rates and taxes more regular than he does; but he objects to charity on principle, and I am sure the best tale that was ever told couldn't get over him. It's a pleasure to work for Mr. Jonas Wilson. But, excuse me, we are wasting time,—where is this son or daughter of Mr. Thomas?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Herbert, "he must be consulted on the subject."

The old woman, at Mrs. Herbert's request, now set off to the farm to fetch her grandson, while Mr. Brown partook of the bread and cheese and ale which were offered to him, and informed his hostess of several points which it would be necessary for her to know, before she could properly advise the ignorant people who depended on her judgment. She found that Mr. Jonas Wilson was a very old man, universally respected, and what, perhaps, followed as a matter of course, very rich—that he had no wife, or child, or other near relation living, and none whatever that he was acquainted with. She ascertained, also, that though he was severely smitten by paralysis, he had no symptom of speedy death, and that his wish to see his grandchild was exceedingly urgent, as if an uneasy conscience gave additional force to the natural wish to have a person belonging to one's own blood by the death-bed. When Mrs. Hobson returned, accompanied by her grandson, whom Mrs. Herbert introduced by saying, "This is Thomas Wilson," Mr. Brown gave evidence of more feeling than his previous conversation implied; his heart seemed to have been schooled to the peculiarities of his daily occupation; a long life passed in a uniform routine of duties, without any private

anxieties, seemed to have armed it with a conventional coldness against any distress which happened not to himself: but now he seemed taken by surprise, and attacked in the part where he had hitherto been impregnable—the situation, the circumstances of this lad, seemed a reproach to the house, and an impeachment of its respectability. He was shocked and grieved.

"Bless me," cried Mr. Brown, "and is that really Mr. Thomas Wilson's son? Dear me, I never thought of this! Mr. Jonas Wilson's grandson!—and here, a ploughboy in a frock!—and I have had all the comforts of life! My good woman, why in the name of Heaven didn't ye let me know? Why, we could have raised enough money in an hour, in the warehouse, to keep him and bring him up handsomely!"

"I thank you, sir," said Mrs. Hobson, crying. "You are very good to poor folk like we; but I didn't know that anybody cared about us."

"True, true," said Mr. Brown; then turning to Mrs. Herbert, he said—"There's been some sad mismanagement here, ma'am; but it must be set to rights now. Surely, Mr. Jonas Wilson could not have guessed that his son's child was brought up in such a way as this. No, no; he could not! Why, there's not a servant on the

premises who would not have helped him. Upon my word, ma'am, I never felt so in all my life before. I can't talk to him on the business. Pray be so good as to tell the young man what I am come about."

"Thomas," said Mrs. Herbert, "this kind gentleman has been sent by your grandfather, who is a rich man in London, to take you back with him; do you wish to go?"

"I don't know, ma'am," said Tom, looking at his grandmother doubtfully, and then at Mrs. Herbert; "does grandmother want me to go?"

"Oh, yes; she will not object to your going."

"And please, ma'am, do you think I ought to go?"

"By all means."

"Well, I don't mind, then; but granny will go too, then?"

Mrs. Herbert looked to Mr. Brown for an answer; and he said—

"Why, no, Mr. Thomas; I have no instructions to take anybody besides you. I can't go beyond my orders."

"Well, then," said Tom, resolutely, taking his old relation by the hand—"I can't go. I shan't leave grandmother!"

The old woman's eyes brightened at these words, although they made her cry afresh; and Mrs. Herbert informed the wondering Mr. Brown of the circumstances that had drawn the hearts of the two relations so close together. But when she mentioned that for some years the incessant labour of the young man in the fields had been the sole stay of his grandmother against the harsh charity of parish officers, Mr. Brown again proved himself a man capable of passion, and gave vent to his feelings in language such as probably he little dreamt, a few hours previous, would ever issue from his lips. After a pause, during which he examined his pocket-book, and seemed to be referring to his instructions, he said to Thomas Wilson—

"And so, Mr. Thomas, you will not go to London to become a rich man?"

"No, I wont," was the reply.

"And why wont you?"

"Why, there's only granny and I to help one another, and who's to work for her when I go away?"

"But you don't consider that when you are a rich man you can keep your grandmother without working in the fields?"

"And when should I be rich, sir?"

"Why, as soon as your grandfather dies; and he wont live many years, I am afraid."

"No, that wont do," said Tom, taking the old woman's hand kindly; "for what's granny to do in the meantime? I shall go back to my work."

"Stop a bit, young man," said Mr. Brown. "With your permission, ma'am," to Mrs. Herbert, "I would ask Mr. Thomas to sit down, and talk this matter over."

"Sit down, Thomas," said the lady, "and hear what this gentleman has to say. You shall please yourself afterwards."

"I have no instructions," said Mr. Brown—"I have no instructions on any subject, but that of taking you to town with me. But as my orders are strict on that point, I can prevent all objections. Suppose you go for a few weeks. You can't be forced to stay, you know; but can return when you choose, if you don't like London."

"And will granny go along?"

"No; but listen to me. Suppose you go for a month, and I will leave enough money to keep your grandmother so long; most likely, by the end of that time you would be able to send more, and if not, you could return."

Now Thomas Wilson was not without a wish natural to most English youths, to see London, whose fame had reached to him through the reports of waggoners, and other adventurous travellers, who had pushed their researches into the distant parts of the realm; and he hesitated at this offer of Mr. Brown. But when that gentleman took from his pocket-book a five-pound note as the payment of his grandmother's expenses for a month, the sum, so much greater than his earnings for such a period, awoke in him certain indistinct ideas of the universal wealth of the great city, and materially softened his resolutions.

"I don't care, for my own part," said he, "whether I go or not; but I will do whatever Mrs. Herbert bids me."

"I think, madam," said Mr. Brown to Mrs. Herbert, "you cannot but see the propriety of the young man returning with me, since he would at once have an opportunity of acquiring a good education, and as soon as he became capable of it would probably take a very lucrative part in the concern, to say nothing of his being heir to his grandfather's large property. Why, half the noblemen's sons in England would be glad to have such a chance!"

"Yes, Thomas," said Mrs. Herbert; "I think you should not neglect such an opportunity as this. I should advise you to give your master notice on Saturday."

"With your leave, madam, that will not do," said Mr. Brown. "If you consider the precarious state of Mr. Jonas Wilson—that nothing is known respecting his will at present—and that another attack might be fatal, or might render him incapable of arranging anything, you will see that no time is to be lost, but that the young man had better go with me at once."

"Perhaps you are right, Sir. What do you say, Thomas?—are you willing? Remember that you are now in the way of doing more for your grandmother than you otherwise could hope to do."

"I shall do as you bid me, ma'am; but somehow, I'd rather stop here, and go on with my learning."

"Oh, you'll prosecute your studies better in London; you will be able to get more able masters. And when would you wish to leave, sir?"

"Why," replied Mr. Brown, "the sooner the better. I should like to start to-day—in fact,

as soon as Mr. Thomas can change his clothes, and get his luggage ready."

God bless the man! Talk of Tom's changing his clothes, and packing up his wardrobe, as though he were a Brummel; while, probably, the only stock of raiment in his possession was just another shirt, jacket, and frock, which were ready for use on Sunday morning, and not before; for, as to anything like a decent suit of clothes, Tom's back had never yet been graced by anything of the kind. Mrs. Herbert hinted at this to Mr. Brown, when, opening his eyes wide with astonishment, as he looked at Tom from head to foot, he said—

"Oh, ah! I see; but he can't go to town exactly like that. I declare, he must just come along with me to Alverley—it's only five miles, I believe—and I dare say we shall find a tailor who will put him in trim. And yet," said he, in a hesitating manner, again looking at Mr. Tom's elegant apparel, "perhaps I had better step over myself, and send a tailor to measure him. Yes, that will be the best plan; and Mr. Thomas can get ready in the meantime."

Mrs. Herbert smiled as she remarked Mr. Brown's evident reluctance to exhibit himself

in the little town by the side of honest Tom; but, indeed, that reluctance was not very unreasonable, since, though Mr. Brown was a staid plain-looking man, the very reverse of a beau, yet he had spent all his life in London, where he certainly never came in personal contact, to say nothing of exhibiting himself in public, on familiar terms, with a gentleman beautified with such an exterior as Mr. Thomas Wilson. Mrs. Herbert, however, soon set this matter to rights, by observing—

"Perhaps, Mr. Brown, it would be best for Thomas to go with you: you would be less likely to be disappointed. I think I can suggest a plan that might be adopted. I have in the house some clothes belonging to my son, which I believe would nearly fit Thomas. Now, if he were to step home at once, and clean himself, I could presently send him down such clothes as I can find; and, in your way to Alverley, you could call, and explain to the young man's master the circumstances of the affair; and as Thomas has been a very good servant, I have no doubt that he would procure an immediate dismissal. You see that it is impossible for you to leave this day; and, indeed, I do not think you could persuade the young man to leave all his friends

at so short a notice—I should be sorry if he did so. I therefore beg, that when you return in the afternoon, you will all come up, and spend the evening here. I mean you Thomas, and you Dame; and Mr. Brown, if you have no engagement, I hope you will favour us with your company. These good folks have shewn us that their hearts are warm and uncorrupted, and Thomas, in particular, has been a daily visitor so long, that I do not know that I could see him depart so suddenly without pain."

This advice was acknowledged by all parties to be the best that could be adopted; and Tom Wilson immediately ran home, while Mrs. Herbert looked out a decent suit of clothes for him, after sending off which, she gathered a few more particulars from Mr. Brown respecting the firm at Wapping. This was the subject which, perhaps, more than all others, Mr. Brown loved to converse on; and, therefore, it required very little questioning on her part to ascertain all that she could wish to know. She pushed her questions a little far, it must be confessed; yet no further than she thought right: for the young man, in perfect ignorance of the world, was about to be thrust abruptly into the business, the gaiety, and the wickedness of a city,

which would tempt him with the charm of perfect novelty, without a single protector or adviser, saving a paralytic relative, who, by the harsh cruelty of his character, had acquired her utter dislike, while the young man, by his natural good qualities, a mind eager for enlightenment, and a heart glowing with gratitude and reverence, to say nothing of the habit of seeing him in her house every day, had won such a portion of her liking, that she could not see him turn into a new path of life, where dangers might exist, without making such inquiries as would enable her to convey to him a proper warning. It was, therefore, with considerable pleasure that she learned from Mr. Brown, that the firm of Jonas Wilson and Co. was an old and important one; but that now it consisted of Mr. Jonas Wilson only; that Thomas would probably take an active part in the business, if not be the master of it immediately, if he were able to manage it; that his immediate command of money would depend on the amount of his education; that if he did not become the master of much money at once, he would undoubtedly be, before long, the possessor of the very large property of his grandfather, and that he (Mr. Brown) himself would be very

happy to see to the young man, if, as seemed probable, he was a stranger to London.

While Mr. Brown was still assuring Mrs. Herbert that every facility would be ensured to Thomas for the completion of his education, and that it was very unlikely any harm would befall him, the young gentleman himself entered, accompanied by Miss Herbert, who had accidentally met him near the house in returning from a long walk which she had begun before the arrival of Mr. Brown. It must be confessed, that Thomas Wilson was by no means a bad-looking fellow when exhibited in garments of a civilized shape; in fact, he bade fair to become a handsome man; and Miss Herbert, when she entered the cottage, had scarcely recovered from a violent fit of blushing, occasioned by the approach and very respectful bow of our gentleman, whom, at first, she failed to recognise as the ploughboy pupil of her mother. The circumstances of the case were now communicated to the young lady, who congratulated him on his prospects, and recommended him to pursue his studies, when the two gentlemen set out towards the town, and the two ladies, with the assistance of the old woman, set about preparing some little trifles for the evening's frugal entertainment.

In due time the gentlemen returned, and, with the ladies, prepared to spend a cheerful afternoon. There was nothing fashionable to be looked at; there was nothing expensive to be eaten or drunk; but the hearts around the domestic board were as simple as the viands—and they were happy. The ladies could not help feeling that they had contributed to fashion into something like an intellectual being what had seemed but a senseless clod; the young man's heart was full of gratitude and hope; Mr. Brown was delighted with the novelty of his situation, interested in the young man, and making them all merry with his enjoyment; and the old woman was proud of sitting along with the great ladies—proud to be with Mr. Brown, whom she thought the best humoured and greatest man in the world—but, above all, proud of her well-dressed grandson, whom she could not once look on without a starting tear, which yet was full of sweetness. Every heart present beat with its own peculiar emotion; but all were attuned to a chord of goodness; and how could they be otherwise than happy? Supper, served up at a true village hour, was finished as the tinkling village clock struck nine; when Mr. Brown arose, and said—

"Well, ladies, this has been one of the happiest days of my life; and I am really sorry that I must be going. I need not tell you, that ready money found a tailor prepared to supply our young friend's wants by to-morrow morning. I shall walk back to Alverley this evening, to engage places by the morning coach, and, in fact, to get a bed; for I don't see any promising inns in your pretty village, and you know we Londoners like to be well lodged. Mr. Thomas has agreed to meet me at Alverley in the morning, to breakfast, as we must start early. Good night, ladies; and I sincerely hope and believe that you will never hear anything of my new friend, Mr. Thomas, that will give you pain."

The ladies shook hands heartily with the good-natured Londoner, and Thomas would have accompanied him to the town as a guard, but Mr. Brown probably knew that if parting moments are miserable, it is a misery that love can never wish to be abridged, for he insisted on going alone. After the departure of the good-natured and merry Mr. Brown, whose easy manners had acted as a kind of medium between the Herberts and their humble visitors, so as to prevent that little uneasiness which is always felt on both sides in the familiar intercourse of

persons of different rank and education, conversation declined, and Mrs. Hobson and her grandson relapsed into the bashfulness which soon led to preparation for departure.

When Mrs. Herbert said that she should not see Thomas Wilson depart without some degree of pain, the reader, if he be not more generous than the great majority of the world, will suppose that she merely uttered one of those common-place, civil falsehoods, by which a smooth surface is preserved to society. But such was not altogether the fact; what she spoke she felt; and if the reader be so fine a person as not to comprehend how an ill-dressed, ignorant plough-boy could touch the heart of a woman of birth, or so selfish that he cannot imagine any human being to possess a heart capable of pure benevolence, he may impute her feelings to any selfish origin he may choose. But whether the habit of protection and instruction beget a feeling of property in the thing protected, or whether she considered that the mind of the young man was, as it were, her child, and that therefore her anxiety, as to its future improvement, had somewhat of the maternal character, certain it is, that as her visitors arose to depart, she felt as though a friend was

leaving her; she thought the cottage would not be so cheerful; but she had so few friends, that she must have been loth to part with anything that looked on her with kindness.

"Well, Thomas, we must part, I suppose," said Mrs. Herbert, when she saw the young man prepared to go; "and it is likely you are to become a great man, and I earnestly hope you will be prosperous in the world, but I more earnestly desire that you may deserve to be so."

"Ay, and in God's name I hope he will be a good youth!" cried the old woman, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron, while Thomas stood looking on the ground, with a red face, too full of confusion to be able to speak.

"You must be aware, from all that has passed this evening, that your good or ill fortune will principally depend on your improving your education, which you will in future have abundant opportunities of doing; but whatever success may attend you, we shall all be sorry for it, if you do not preserve the same kind and good heart that you will carry away."

The eyes of the young man lightened at these kind words of the respected lady, and he

would have spoken, but the emotions of his heart could not yet find words to please himself, and he was silent, while Mrs. Herbert continued—

"The ways of London, and the people you will meet, are so different from those of our village, that it is a matter of doubt with me whether it would not be better for you to remain. Yet your extreme poverty, the awakening remorse of your grandfather, and the certainty that if you will, you may be as virtuous in London as here, are strong reasons why you should go. But remember, if you gave way to the temptations of London, your first step would be to leave your grandmother to starve, and you will lose our esteem; and all the friendships you might afterwards form would not give you such pleasure as the few gained by your virtues."

This was a long parting speech, but nobody besides Mrs. Herbert seemed able to say anything, and the awkwardness of parting moments is materially relieved by a brisk speaker. Thomas had been preparing himself all this time to say something which was on his heart, and he now observed—"You will be angry, ma'am, if I say, what I——." He stopped.

"Speak out, Thomas," said Mrs. Herbert; we are your friends; you will not offend any one here."

"Will you then promise, ma'am, to call on grandmother sometimes, or let her just call here, when she will have nobody to speak to; and will you read my letters to her?"

"Certainly, with very great pleasure."

"And—pray pardon my boldness—but will you think of me, that is, will you just take some little interest in me, so long as I do nothing to make me ashamed of myself?"

"Yes, Thomas; I am disposed to think of you with very great esteem; and it must be something very different from what I expect in your conduct which could change my feelings."

"Then I don't care," said Tom, with boldness, and standing erect; "if you and Miss Fanny will let me think that you will be the kind friends you have been, I shall never do anything to disgrace myself. I shall always think you are looking at me, wherever I go."

"So long as you have such feelings, Thomas, we shall be the warmest of your friends."

"I can't say what I want to say," replied the youth, with a burst of feeling full of energy; "I can't say what I feel, ma'am; but I can't forget

what I was when you first came into the village. I am told that I am going among rich people, and may perhaps be rich myself. But I owe everything to you. If I were now as I was then, I should be ashamed to go among people like Mr. Brown. I should be laughed at every hour of the day. I owe it to you that I am not ashamed now, and that if I have not so much knowledge as other persons, I have the love for it, and the determination to improve. I owe everything to you, and I wish that Mr. William was going where I am, and that I was his servant; but as that can't be, I will do my best; and do not think that ever for a moment I shall forget that you are my best friends."

"That's true," cried the old woman; "hark to the lad! He's a good boy—that's the truth."

"He is, dame," said Mrs. Herbert, "and I have no doubt that he will remember the promises he has made to us this evening."

All was said. There was silence for a minute, as there always is between parting friends after the credentials of remembrance are delivered, when it seems as though the heart were dissatisfied with the faculties of the tongue to deliver its feelings, and required an extra moment to perfect in its silent workings what

language had left unuttered. Mrs. Herbert was the first to speak. She expressed formally her wishes for the young man's welfare, and offered her hand and her daughter's to their departing friend; but Thomas had never yet taken the hand of a member of the family, and even now an awkward bashfulness prevented him. He bowed low before the ladies, just looked at both for a moment with streaming eyes, and walked hastily away without speaking. The old woman rebuked him as they walked home for his rudeness in not taking the offered hand, and in not saying farewell; but probably Mrs. Herbert considered that nothing essential to the spirit of a parting moment had been omitted.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I.

If I were to mention the particular quality which has struck me most forcibly in the novels of the last twenty years, it would be their truth of observation or exact portraiture of nature. This fault—"Fault!" you, my dear reader, will exclaim; "why what would you have better than truth?—what is more desirable than nature?" Yes; I own that all that is very proper and common-place; and if truth or nature were a term which contained only one meaning, I should have nothing to say; but, unfortunately, although any given point of actual life does in itself offer to all the world the same outline, there are a good many different ways of looking at it, and the eye of the most careful observer may be a very different one from that which

sparkles in the head of a man of genius. This makes all the difference. I by no means assert that the lineaments of truth and nature are not the proper subjects of books; but I believe that a person who can make a very exact description of every scene of life, both animate and inanimate, may prove a very indifferent author. I cannot see that any merit can be claimed for describing what God has made perceptible to the senses of every man.

I have no doubt that the lawyers' and barbers' clerks, who get up our fashionable novels, go to the first sources for their information, by forming acquaintance with well-informed footmen and ladies'-maids, and taking an occasional dinner with them underground, where they observe the habit and customs of high life. It is well known that the authors of the Jack-Ketch school are pretty intimate with the swell-mob, and not altogether unknown to the interior of a certain large building in the Old Bailey. I am sure that the celebrated gentleman who sees martyrs in murderers, gentlemen in scoundrels, and pure women in prostitutes, is well known to have pictured the events of his own family, and the feelings of his own heart; and I myself have seen a great painter of cockney-life taking

his pipe and pot at the "Cat and Wheel" with a select party of coalheavers and coachmen! It may be believed, therefore, that the pictures drawn by these rapid manufacturers of novels are taken from actual observation. But in spite of all this, the damning fact will come on the attention of the reader, that the books are dull. Nothing can stand against that. You may talk for ever of life, of truth, of correct drawing and colouring; they contain the seeds of a rapid dissolution if they are dull.

But all this dulness is imputable to the author, since there is not a circumstance of human life which may not be made interesting by the hand of genius. The mere observer jots down words very correctly—perhaps he describes the sigh and the smile, the cunning look or the pathetic appeal; but after all this, we want to see the human heart beating under these outward demonstrations. It is not enough that the novelist describes accurately what every one might see—any auctioneer or appraiser might do that. It is his province to mark the spirit that actuates the individuals, and contrasts with or directs their language. Even on inanimate subjects, the same power is required. If I wished to purchase an estate, I

would rather employ a land-agent than Shakspeare to examine it and report the items for which I was to pay cash; but if I wished to know and comprehend the spirit of the place—to understand in what manner it interested the mind of a man, I would rather take the word of a Bloomfield or a Burns than all the George Robinses in the world.

This mention of poets in relation to novelists was not undesigned. There is a closer similarity between the office of a novelist and that of the very highest of poets than at first sight would appear probable. I speak with regard to invention. Invention, perhaps, is not the right word for any operation of the mind of man, since invention is creation, and no man can create—he can only arrange in certain forms the elements which already exist. But, to use the word in its accepted meaning, I may say that invention is the art of shewing how persons invested with certain proportions of mental and physical powers, and of passions, would act when placed in certain situations and in contact with other persons endowed with different proportions of passion and power. Invention, therefore, relates rather to the spirit than to the form of human life. Invention even goes beyond the

experience of life. There is an order of truth and nature which lies beyond the common track—a realm into which genius alone can penetrate—the possible, not the existing form, of human nature—and to bring forward to the world such phases of human character as it has never seen or never noticed, but which it immediately acknowledges to be true, is the surest proof of the presence of genius.

Of such characters, removed from common life, the Faust of Göthe, the Caliban of Shakspeare, and the Satan of Milton, are some of the noblest examples. There is nothing in the whole range of human experience to shew that such beings ever did or will exist; yet are they not the less true for that doubt, since we are convinced that if they did exist they would act precisely as the poets describe. Herein genius stands out from the ranks of common minds, and elevates itself as it were to the place of a God, since it peoples a void which had been left in nature.

But throughout the whole range of such characters, from Homer to Byron, the invention of the poet is but a new arrangement of the qualities he has observed in mankind. He describes nothing which he has not seen; be-

cause if he did so, he would not be understood for want of the sympathy springing from recognition of a truth by the mind of the reader. In this respect the office of the highest poet and that of the novelist are identical — to arrange in such combinations the results of observation as shall be recognised to agree with the nature of man. Herein Cervantes and Fielding rank with Homer and Shakspeare. Partridge, Wild, Adams, Don Quixote, and Sancho perhaps were never seen on the earth — probably never will be; and if we saw them in actual life they would not delight us, unless we possessed a portion of the author's genius; nor would a mere description of their persons and conversation gratify a reader; yet is the description of those characters as really and essentially true as that of any man whom we ourselves know.

There is not, perhaps, in any casual intercourse of society, much that is so thoroughly or essentially humorous, sublime, or even interesting, as to strike every observer. The circumstances which would make one man laugh or cry would not touch the heart of another. Now, the man who did not laugh nor cry might observe very accurately; but the feeling

which he had not, he could not communicate, and his narrative would be a mere catalogue of words or events. The man who laughed or cried, whether he described as accurately as the other or no, would paint the circumstance in relation to the emotion which it created, and give its spirit, which would be found infinitely more precious than the form. This man would be a man of genius. The persons he saw he would distinguish by their peculiar qualities to individualize them; because it was chiefly through a perception of character or motive that he had been affected: he might not add or alter a circumstance, but he would give the scene of actual life with perfect truth, yet with an imperceptible colouring which informs you of its spirit. This was what was done by Fielding and Scott; and it was genius.

How different is all this from the practice of our times! The great bulk of our novelists have mistaken, or are incapable of accomplishing, the legitimate purpose of their works. Most of them give very accurately the interior of a village alehouse or town-hotel—a palace or a hovel; but they do not give what alone would make their works valuable—the operations of the hearts assembled in them. They fancy a dialogue

must be interesting because it really occurred, instead of its deriving an interest from our perfect knowledge of those that speak; or because it is between lords and ladies, while the conversation ought to be such as to make lords and ladies interesting, through shewing the human hearts beating under their velvet and satin.

By this easy method of writing—this substitution of descriptions of outsides and cataloguing dull dialogues, instead of analyses of hearts and characters, we are in danger of suffering the generation to pass away without leaving a true record of its spirit; and our descendants, who may procure a body of our novels of real life, will conclude that we had little more character than the lay figure round which the sculptor arranges his drapery, or the doll on which madame displays her fashions.

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Herbert thought truly that the cottage would be duller when young Wilson was gone. I do not pretend that she had become particularly attached to him, or that the young man was possessed of such virtues or qualities as could have acquired her very warm esteem; because, being herself a woman of great accomplishments and high breeding, I am aware that no person wanting in those adornments could have created in her bosom a sentiment of affection, except such as one feels towards a favourite servant or dependent, in which esteem and even respect are prevented from growing into friendship, by the continual consciousness of the other's inferiority. She had been accustomed to so many amusements and occupations at the Hall, and had so few now, that the employment

of giving instruction to the lad had grown into a habit, which, of course, she loved; and any habitual occupation in the dull routine of the cottage life must have been greatly missed, after such a sudden cessation; to say nothing of the delightful spirit of that employ—doing good to one who had acquired a claim by unsolicited and unexpected endeavour to be of service to her, when all the great and the rich of her friends had taken flight along with her prosperity. A comparison between the humble peasants and her lady and gentleman friends was inevitable in her present circumstances, and it was so little to the advantage of the richer party, that she could have almost discarded her prejudices in favour of wealth and elegance, and taken the cottagers as equal friends. She might have done that in the course of time; but it was over now—the friendship that might have been formed, and the occupation which had relieved the monotony of her life. She had no visitors whom she loved, and no certain employment besides the drudgery of the house, which the habits of her early years had not fitted her to delight in performing methodically, but which only a sense of necessity enabled her to perform at all.

She could, to be sure, and she did, still visit

the sick and the distressed among her humble neighbours; and perhaps she was more welcome and useful now than in the days of her greatness, since she still carried in her person and manners the influence of education and birth, while she had lost the embarrassing influence of pomp and riches, which often makes the attentions of great people oppressive to small ones. But this kind of philanthropy was more pleasant to others than to herself. She could not look on poverty, and sickness, and distress, without wishing to relieve them, as she had done so many years; nor without wishing to impress it as a sacred duty on her daughter. She still had her little band of pensioners, which seemed almost a necessary of her life; but what they received was rather a testimony of her will than a benefit of importance; it was very different from her pension-list when she was mistress of the family which had always spent ten or twelve thousand a year; and often did she leave a sick bed and a distressed family, with a heart almost bursting with grief at her incapability to bestow a trifle, which would make a dozen hearts happy, but which she could not give, without a chance of running in

debt, and a certainty of injuring her own poor children.

There was another reason why the cottage was somewhat duller, at least to Mrs. Herbert, when young Wilson had left. To Fanny, perhaps, all places and all circumstances would be alike, so long as she was with her mother. She lived in her mother. At her feet she would have chosen to live—in her arms to die would be sweeter than any foreign pomp; her love was the sweetest picture of happiness, her smile the best reward for labour, her presence was all she could imagine of protection; and she doubtless would have parted with father and brother, and a host of kindred, if she had them, to preserve that most beloved of all her kindred, her mother. But Mrs. Herbert's situation and feelings were somewhat different; she had been tenderly nurtured amidst a host of protectors, to the hour when she gave herself to the arms of an affectionate husband, and had never to depend on her own energies, by which she might have acquired a masculine courage: no danger had ever seemed possible to her: a gulf appeared to lie between her and the casualties of human life; and, although she was a woman of strong

moral courage, who might have done any act of duty at the peril of the axe or the gibbet, or ventured with an unblanched countenance on the greatest danger in the universe when she could comprehend it, she was a woman of lively imagination; and the upright principles and the moral courage, produced or strengthened by an active imagination, are by no means incompatible with a certain degree of fear or cowardice with regard to dangers which are announced by indistinct signs or sounds, and which therefore leave the imagination free to array the supposed evil in form and substance dreadful in proportion to the indistinctness of the object and the force of the imagination. She was a woman as gentle and as timid as her little Fanny; but she had no mother to look up to with a consciousness of protection; she had lost the husband, whose presence was a more sure guard than an army; she had lost the servants who had formerly occupied so many rooms near to hers; there was no human being on whom she could depend; and in the long evenings and nights, the drunken voices of men returning from market and fair, the rattling of the panes shaken by the noisy wind, were suffi-

cient to alarm and terrify her; and even a thought of the weak defence which their ill-fastened doors and shutters afforded against the attack of a man of violence, kept her many a night sleepless and alarmed, and listening with a breathless attention, like a little child at the recollection of some terrible nursery tale.

But besides this imaginative fear incidental to the sex when deprived of their natural protectors, there was another feeling peculiar to the sex in all circumstances, which rendered the cottage a scene of loneliness. There was something unnatural in the little establishment; there was something wanting, without which labour was unpleasant, and enjoyment imperfect. Woman was not made to live alone any more than man; and the absence of the natural assistant of the gentle sex was felt in ways separate from protection and support. All the actions of a woman, whether of useful industry or of ornament, are subject to the approval and pleasure of the other sex, to which their own are subordinate, and on which they are founded. To descend to the humblest form of this feeling: every one knows, that when a fair lass has arrayed herself in her new gown, or ribbons, or

any finery put on for the first time, although the admiration of her female acquaintance may give a degree of pleasure, the applause or compliment of one man is more valued than that of a thousand women; and this feeling, modified by the circumstances of individuals, runs through the whole sex, and is part of the nature of the human being, implanted in the heart by the Divine artificer, to produce the most delicious fruit that grows in the garden of human life. Women, by themselves, require little to be comfortable; they can live without bustle and without form; neither in beauty of raiment nor in delicacy of food can they find happiness, so long as they have it to themselves alone. They require to please the other sex, before they can please themselves. A knot of old maids may, to be sure, be bitterly merry over their tea and scandal, and despise the other sex with profound disdain, but there is something unnatural in that enjoyment; nor does anybody suppose that the respectable spinster's heart bounds with such a sweet human delight at the compliment of her female friends, on her neat room, darling spaniel, and strong tea, as the heart of the cottager's wife, when her tired husband tells her how nicely she has cooked his bit of supper, and how pretty she

looks in her clean cap. It matters not, whether the husband be the master of a palace, or the occupier of a hovel; whether his day be spent in the sports of the field, the drudgery of a profession, or the labour of a farm, the pleasure of the wife, and the object of her labour, is to have a table comfortably spread at his return, and to see that he enjoys the delicacies or the necessaries which she has provided for him: whether the provision be merely a piece of bread and cheese and a snow-white table-cloth on the deal table, or the rich soup, the superb joint, and the bottle of exquisite wine laid out in the magnificent dining-room, the feelings of a woman relative to man are the same.

The little cottage and the humble mode of life were not in themselves unpleasing to Mrs. Herbert: even the rough domestic labour, so unlike the occupations of her former years, was not oppressive to her. Had Mr. Herbert been alive, that cottage would have been dearer than a palace. Had William continued with her, they would all have been happy, since they would have had some one to protect them, and some one to please, which had been Mrs. Herbert's situation from childhood. But that was all over now: they were alone. There

was nothing to prepare; nobody to make comfortable; their industry was without object, since it was only for themselves that they laboured, and the dull routine of household work soon became tiresome, and its monotony began to exert a deadening influence on the faculties of the mind. If there had been a hope mixed up with their affairs, the oppression of their mode of life would have been removed, and however distant that hope might have been from fulfilment, it would have stood in the position of a dear father or husband; and made her delight in the dullest and most laborious employ which lay in the direct line of her duty. But hope there was none. For some inscrutable purpose, the face of Providence seemed to be turned away from her and hers. Proud as she was, and as she thought she had every reason to be, of her children, they seemed spurned away by society, and pursued by an unrelenting foe, against whom all defence was useless. Nothing which she or they contemplated could be performed, and what they undertook, utterly failed.

But in this she was unjust: her kindness to young Wilson had not been without good effect. He was well received in London, and when

well-dressed had passed muster very well among other young men in town; so far will a new suit of clothes carry a very small stock of knowledge and manners in this world. The young man soon found himself comfortable, and was able to send his old relation a little money.

All this was very well; it gave Mrs. Herbert pleasure, but the circumstances and the fate of the young man, in whom she had only a passing and accidental interest, were nothing to her in comparison with the condition and prospects of her son, who was so passionately loved, and the lightest circumstance in whose life was as important to her happiness, as the working of her heart was essential to her life. She had not suffered herself to believe so firmly as her son in his success in London; she had endeavoured to repress his hopes, that he might suffer less from the disappointment which was at least possible; but the very earnestness and confidence of his expectations had reflected somewhat of their energy into her bosom, and combined with her strong wish for his success and her pride in his talent, to create almost a belief that he might really improve their fortunes in his proposed profession. The hearts of mother and children were like chords tuned in unison, where the one

which is touched communicates its music to the others, which breathe forth an echo of the tone. From the highest to the lowest note, the music of the mother's heart was what her children made it, and every emotion of their hope and fear, and joy and sorrow, vibrated on the chords of her own heart. That music was awhile very sweet,—so long as William's letters were full of confidence; but, as he wrote from the fulness of love, and not from form, his letters were the transcripts of the present feelings—they grew less and less assured, they spoke of doubts and difficulties; at length they confessed the impossibility of procuring a publisher for his writings, and his consequent utter disappointment; after which information, as she received no letter for two or three weeks, she grew very anxious and was exceedingly unhappy.

Poverty now put on its most terrible form: it not only kept her in continual anxiety, caution, and want, but it was threatening the destruction of her children. I fancy I hear some of my readers exclaiming against Mrs. Herbert for considering herself poor with a pound a-week to live on, while there are so many millions of our fellow-creatures who are compelled to subsist on a quarter of that sum, and that uncertain. But

poverty, like most of the blessings and curses of this world, is comparative; the expenditure and the saving of a lady will be always different from that of a labourer; her necessaries will be of somewhat a different nature; and it would take a long course of teaching to bring a lady, accustomed to the gaieties and luxuries of wealth, down to the domestic economy of the poor mechanic's wife. Mrs. Herbert, though poor, was yet somewhat different from a person brought up in poverty; she would not have been taken for one of the slaves of the factory or the farm; the food which she purchased for her little family was somewhat superior to the wretched garbage on which our manufacturing population exist; there were little articles to be purchased not found in the hovel of a peasant, but which seemed to her absolute necessaries; there was a trifle daily to be given to persons more distressed; and though she often pinched herself even in food, at the end of the week there was seldom a farthing left of the income. But leaving to individual opinions the question as to whether Mrs. Herbert's income was a handsome independency or a starvation allowance in her circumstances and habits, I shall be justified in saying that even if it were a comfortable thing

in a time of health it would be found rather confined for a time of sickness; and this evil came upon them. Mrs. Herbert, though a delicate woman, had never been troubled with any painful disease of nature, or any delightful disorder of fashion. The sound constitution she had inherited had not been spoiled by dissipation or affectation; but, although I considered it useless to describe the commonest feelings of our nature, which every one who has a heart can imagine, the death of her husband had wounded her very severely, although she had as little indulged in a public display of her sorrow as I have done in describing it. The sudden destruction of their handsome and comfortable establishment was something to be regretted; but the sudden loss of the man she had long loved was a blow which struck to the heart, and was not to be cured or alleviated save by a long and tender treatment. Many a time had she slunk away to weep where her children might not see her, and suffer again in her sorrows the loss of their father. She had borne up for them; but now when her son appeared to be lost—to be thrown on the world without a prospect of earning his bread, it seemed to her that she had misapprehended the nature of the family misfortune, and that to

the death of her husband she was to add the destruction of her children. Thoughts of this nature pressing continually on her mind through the dull hours of the day, and the long sleepless hours of night, her mind became affected; she grew low-spirited and unhappy, and appeared to be pining away.

This condition of the family had an unexpected effect on Fanny Herbert. She was now about sixteen, rather under the middle size, and of a more juvenile appearance than age. She was a mere child, so far as regarded her self-dependence and knowledge of the world. She had at least an average degree of the knowledge to be derived from books and teachers, and had acquired more than the rudiments of those sciences which beautify the woman of rank or fortune; but what she knew she had learned of her mother, from whom she had never been separated. She had been brought up, as it were, in her arms, and was as thoughtless as an infant, because she was nearly as ignorant of the affairs of the world. She had never known want in her person or her family, and the want which she had known in other families she had known only as a reliever of it. It had never come home to her bosom as an evil which saps the health, ruins the temper

weakens the intellect, and even attacks the morals—she had never known it as an evil for which there was no relief. The practical lesson she was now to study wrought a greater change in her thoughts and feelings, and even in her person, than could have been effected by years of theoretical and didactical teaching. Her mother, so profoundly adored, was sick and unhappy, and appeared to take little or no interest in their domestic arrangements, the burden of which, for the first time, fell on her: she was growing thin and weak, and had lost her appetite; and it was Fanny's chief and most welcome employment to prepare those little dainties that not only support, but tempt the sick person to take them: it was in the course of this employ, when stopped by her mother from want of money, that she discerned the essential circumstances of their position. She had never known the value of money; she had never possessed any considerable sum; she had never spent much; everything that could be wanted was always to be had in their house; her occasional shopping tours with her mother had not taught her that money was an indispensable necessary; when she wanted a sum for any purpose whatever, she could have it for asking, as freely

as a meal when she was hungry. Had she lived two or three years longer at the Hall, she would, as a woman, have been placed in circumstances by which she must have lost this ignorance; but she was a child when her father died, and since then money had been the very thing with which they had the least acquaintance. But now, when she saw her mother weak and sick, and her comfort, perhaps her very life, dependent on a little money, the subject assumed a prominence in her mind which it had never done before; there seemed in her bosom a sudden revelation of the nature and objects of social and individual industry, and an impression of duties not thought of before, which were more imperative than all others which she had fulfilled from infancy. Brought down from a state of ease, and idleness, and plenty, was it not her duty to do as other persons as poor as herself? Was she not answerable to society, to her family, and to Providence, for the use of her faculties, physical as well as mental? Was it not a duty inseparable from their circumstances that she should labour and earn the money, without which God had decreed that the poor person should not live? These thoughts dissipated for ever the poetry of the young imagination; the terrible reality of

the actual presented to her, left no disposition for the fanciful; the child, whose affectionate tenderness was at least equalled by her ignorance of the real nature of the present, and her thoughtlessness regarding the future, was at once transformed into the thoughtful and considerate woman, prepared and determined to act in the spirit of her station. The alternations of dancing, drawing, and music—even reading, and the more abstruse branches of study, seemed now a most idle and disgusting waste of time; all the elegances and ornaments of the mind and manners seemed vain and impertinent, because they were put in comparison and competition with the more primitive industry and fundamental necessities of mankind—the most beautiful accomplishments by themselves appeared utterly worthless compared to the plain labour that would produce money to nourish her mother.

Mrs. Herbert's sickness was not unto death. It was a sinking from mental anxiety—a kind of hectic weakness, and low spirits, which have carried thousands of affectionate women to the grave; but which, in Mrs. Herbert's case, a little good fortune to her children would have quickly cured. Fanny, full of her new determination, was quite a different creature. She had a more

than common desire to see her mother well, and she entered into the details of domestic labour with a spirit which she had never before displayed, and spoke to her mother with an alacrity, and an air of womanly confidence, that greatly contributed to keep up her spirits. Ever watchful to carry into execution the plan she had formed, the very first moment when she thought her mother able to bear the communication, she threw her arms around her neck, and said—

"Dear mother, I have a favour to ask of you."

"A favour, my child!" replied the mother; "you cannot ask one of me, because you know you can ask nothing but what I should be glad to do."

"But this is a favour, my dear mother," said Fanny, "and one which you will make some difficulty of granting."

"It must, then, be something beyond my power to guess at. But what is it?"

"You recollect," said Fanny, hesitatingly, "you recollect that Mr. Sharper wished me to become governess to his children—I should be very glad to accept the offer now."

"Fanny, my dear child, would you also leave

me?" cried Mrs. Herbert, pressing her child to her bosom, and bursting into tears; "would you indeed leave your mother? What shall I do, how shall I live, if I lose both my children? No, no, my dear child; I cannot part with you—indeed I cannot—we must live together."

"My dear mamma," replied Fanny, very affectionately, "you are not well, or you would not say what would seem to imply that your Fanny wished to leave you. But do, I pray you, take courage once more, and let us persevere through this struggle, which is, perhaps, harder than any we have yet had to bear. You know every thought that passes through my brain, you know that I would cheerfully venture on any torture that would earn a blessing for you or William, and that not the least of pains is the separation which I have mentioned. It is in the way of my duty. You have done all that you have been called on to do for us, and more; you have suffered William to leave you for a life of industry, and you must suffer me to do what I consider my duty."

"My dear little child, do not pursue this conversation," cried Mrs. Herbert; "you know not what you are talking of. A little girl like you,

who have always been at my side, and not known what a cross word or look means, to adventure into the house of a stranger, and to be treated like one compelled to labour and obedience! Oh, Fanny, my child! I love you the more for your proposition, because it shews a heart not only capable of feeling what virtue is, but capable of putting it in action, even in opposition to its own dearest tastes and inclinations. But you must not do it in this case; you do not comprehend the nature of servitude—reproof, caprice, even discontent, would be enough to drive you back to me with an unspeakable mortification and pain like nothing which you have ever felt; and those are but a few of the evil passions which servitude compels a person to submit to in silence, and almost in respectfulness."

"I may not have discussed the subject so fully as you could do," said Fanny, "but I do not apprehend that I shall meet with any gross ill-treatment if I carry out my present determination to do my duty. I do not expect to find the luxuries which I remember at our Hall, nor the comforts of this dear home, and certainly I shall never find any one able to supply my dear mother's place—that is quite out of the question; but if I get only fair treatment, according to my

endeavours to please, I shall be satisfied by thinking of the object for which I am in servitude."

"I cannot talk on the subject now, Fanny," said Mrs. Herbert, rather quickly, "I am weak —we will talk about it when I am better."

"Nay, mamma; I beg of you not to stop me now. I am sure that your sickness has been brought on by anxiety for your children; and although you will at first feel some pain at the separation, it will be amply repaid by knowing that I am in the way of earning my living without being dependent on any one. But do not look on it as a separation, and think that I am leaving you without help in your sickness; consider that I am not going far from you, but that I shall be within the reach of frequent visits; and then, mamma, I have got such a nice plan for your comfort. You know that young Wilson, in his letters to his grandmother, has often wished that you would allow her to wait on you; as, though older, she is much better able to work than you. It is very evident to me that the young man will not, for some time, be able to take his old relative to London, or procure sufficient money from that wicked grandfather to enable him to support her comfortably here, and

Mrs. Hobson, I have no doubt, is very lonely in that wretched house, to say nothing of being without any employment. It is the very thing, mother; Mrs. Hobson is unfit, both from age, and from her habits, to become a servant in a strange family; but she would be the very person for you. She would be glad to leave her dull old house and come here, and she would love to wait on you; and whether you allowed her to pay part of your expenses, or considered her as a servant, you would find her more useful and less expensive than I have been; since she would work very well under your eyes, and would not require the dresses and books, and the many pretty things which you would give me, even if you starved yourself to do it."

"My dear child, don't mention it," cried Mrs. Herbert, the tears running down her face. "If either of us labour for a livelihood, it must be me. The mother must work for her children, not children for their mother."

"Nay, my dear mother, that must not be. I have considered everything. You would, doubtless, be more successful than I shall be; but you must not be a dependent. You have done your duty in the world; I am young, and not weak; and if I am fairly treated, I can

readily accustom myself to any new duties and occupations. But above all, my dear mother, both William and I must have a home to fly to, if our exertions fail of obtaining success—we must have a dear mother to come to."

It might be supposed, that the thought of sending into the great world a child so young, so delicate, and so utterly unacquainted with the labours and the struggles of servitude, would depress still more the mother's spirits, which anxiety and sickness had already brought very low. But the reverse of this was the fact. Mrs. Herbert was not suffering from a sickly sensibility—from a factitious delicacy, produced by a life of ease and luxury; her sufferings were those of an unvitiated heart, and of that simple and primitive kind which the humblest cottager as well as the inhabitant of a palace has had to bear—a collapsing of the heart and faculties, when, after a resolute struggle for resignation in the loss of a beloved husband, the overthrow of fortune and station, the poverty of her children, and the destruction of their fondest hopes, she feared that even their personal safety was endangered. Had the determination, the immovability of purpose now displayed by Fanny,

been for some object not of a praiseworthy character—for any form of self-gratification, Mrs. Herbert would have mourned over the obstinacy of her child, with a grief to which no one could offer consolation, and which would have depressed her still lower, even to the grave; but the sudden and unexpected spirit of industry and labour in her child—in one so tender and delicate that she seemed yet an infant, whose proper place was her mother's bosom or the little footstool by the fire—the lively sense of independent duty in one who had hitherto humbly and implicitly obeyed the will of her elders, kindled a fresh energy in her mind. It appeared a sin to lie down in idle despair, when even her delicate child was aroused to hope and to vigorous action. Her heaviness of heart tended to repress, not only her own active virtues, but to throw a damp on the sacred impulses of her innocent children. She aroused herself from the unwonted stupor, and looked as calmly as was possible in the circumstances on what her child had proposed. I do not say that she decided, for the decision was not left to her: Fanny could not be turned from her plan when she found that no solid objection could be made against it; she felt that

the time was come for her to act as an independent human being; the sentiment of duty was more powerful than even filial tenderness and obedience; she ceased not to urge her plan until Mrs. Herbert felt herself compelled to give way.

CHAPTER III.

Fanny Herbert, as soon as her mother had consented to her departure, would have applied in person to Mrs. Sharper; but Mrs. Herbert, knowing rather more of the world than her daughter, thought it might be as well to avoid a personal interview with the lady until her pleasure had been communicated by letter. Mrs. Sharper, whose position in society was mentioned in the First Book, as the wife of an attorney, who had partially quitted business, in consequence of several fortunate speculations, was a very respectable woman; was mother of eight children, who, she often said, very conscientiously, were the cleverest and nicest children under the sun; and was an old friend of the

Herberts. But she was not one of those persons who, by the readiness with which they confer an obligation, run the risk of making the receiver of it indifferent to its magnitude, or able to bear it cheerfully; she was willing that no person should be unconscious of the value of any favour received from her, and accordingly set forth its excellence in the boldest light. To Mrs. Herbert's application she replied, that she certainly had offered to take Miss Herbert, as a saving to her mother, but as that offer had not been accepted, she had suited herself, and Mrs. Herbert knew, that though she would be happy to oblige her, it would be very hard to turn away her excellent governess to make room for Miss Herbert. Mrs. Herbert immediately wrote to request that Mrs. Sharper would not on any account dismiss her governess; but in the course of three or four days Mrs. Sharper called, and said, that on second thought, as she had always respected Mrs. Herbert, she had come to the conclusion that it was her duty to oblige her, and that she had dismissed Miss Fagwell. Mrs. Sharper forgot to mention that Miss Fagwell had shewn symptoms of consumption, brought on by incessant labour, anxiety, and want of

repose, and that as she was an orphan without a friend, her sickness and death might have been an expense to her employer; nor did she mention that Miss Fagwell was hired at fifteen pounds a-year, with board and lodging, while Fanny, in consideration of Mrs. Sharper's kindness, and her own inexperience, would perhaps be glad to engage herself for twelve. Mrs. Herbert was excessively annoyed that Mrs. Sharper should have dismissed Miss Fagwell, though the professed motive did not greatly impose on her.

"I am exceedingly sorry," said Mrs. Herbert, "that you should have dismissed your governess, if she gave you satisfaction."

"Oh, we must oblige our friends," replied Mrs. Sharper, in an amiable tone of voice; "Miss Fagwell was certainly very industrious and accomplished, but then—in short, you know, she was only a governess. She was not a friend of the family, like you."

"We are obliged to you," said Mrs. Herbert, "but I should be very sorry to injure Miss Fagwell."

"Not at all—not at all, she was engaged by the month, and had proper notice, and really

there were circumstances—but she is gone, and I must have a governess, you know, even if Miss Herbert and I do not agree."

"Well, in that case, I do not see that I can offer any objections."

"To be sure not. Well, Miss Herbert, you know, in an affair of this importance we must make some little examination, and come to a right understanding. A governess is a very important person in a family like mine, as I wish my children to have the very best education, and especially as they are very clever children that would do credit to a teacher. I should like to know what you would undertake to teach them?"

"I have no doubt that Fanny will be found competent," said her mother.

"I dare say," quoth Mrs. Sharper; "but I should wish to know the particulars. Let me see—there's French and Italian; that's quite indispensable. Everybody parlyvoos now."

"Fanny will teach the rudiments of those languages," said Mrs. Herbert.

"Very good. Then there's dancing and morals. I am very particular about dancing. Ladies must dance."

"Fanny used to dance; I dare say she has not forgotten the figures."

"Very good. Then there's reading, and writing, and ciphering; but I recollect Miss Herbert writes a pretty hand—there will be no difficulty in that. Grammar and the globes come next."

"Fanny can teach those sciences also," said Mrs. Herbert.

"Capital!—we shall do, I dare say. There's music and singing—oh, I recollect hearing Miss Herbert play and sing. Then there's religion, and Latin, and ladies' needlework."

"Why," said Mrs. Herbert, with a quiet smile, "I believe Fanny has had a good deal of practice at needlework lately, and I do not doubt her pleasing you; but religion, I should suppose, would be more firmly impressed on children's minds by parents, and a constant attendance at church."

"I beg pardon. As for church—yes, perhaps that is the place for religion; but the dear children are so lively, that, really, what with one thing and another, they are generally so tired, that they always go to sleep in church, poor things! And, upon my word, I have so

many things to attend to, it is quite out of my power to look after them—I always expect my governess to see to their religion."

"Well, Fanny will do her best, I have no doubt, if such is your wish," said Mrs. Herbert, "but with regard to Latin, excuse me, that seems to me somewhat of a masculine accomplishment, and I am sure that Fanny does not know a word of it."

"No!—that's a great pity! Everybody says that Latin is a capital sort of thing. Miss Fagwell taught Latin, and really — but my children are so clever, that a governess will have but very little trouble with them. Perhaps Miss Herbert would have no objection to study it in her leisure hours."

To this Fanny assented, when Mrs. Sharper alluded to salary. But Fanny and her mother were the worst people in the world to drive a bargain; and as they hesitated, Mrs. Sharper said, "Times are very bad, Mrs. Herbert—very. I assure you, you can't imagine how difficult it is to get in our rents; and, considering that Miss Herbert is quite a beginner and that she will be treated as one of the family, I think, perhaps, —besides board, lodging, and washing,—twelve

guineas the first year, to be raised the next, if we agree, &c."

Twelve pounds a year, even including board, lodging, and washing, was not a very high sum for teaching French, Italian, music, singing, grammar, the globes, reading, writing, cipher-ing, morals, Latin, needlework, and religion, which Mrs. Sharper stipulated for; but Fanny had scarcely learned the different powers of twelve and twelve hundred pounds, and Mrs. Herbert was indifferent about it, because, wish-ing Fanny not to leave her, she doubted not that a very short experience would send her home, determined not again to leave it. Fanny was therefore engaged at twelve guineas, Mrs. Sharper observing, that ladies generally re-quired strict testimonials, but that she thought, on the whole, perhaps,—nay, she would dis-pense with them in the present case.

But Fanny had not to teach all the eight children for twelve pounds. Oh, no! One of the eight was still in the nurse's arms, and two others were grown beyond governesses and tutors. Not that they had learned all that could be taught, or were very highly accom-plished, but the eldest son and daughter had

been, of course, so beloved by father and mother, that they had never been bothered with teaching. Mr. Thomas Sharper, at eighteen years of age, could probably read pretty well, and write after a fashion, beyond which his literary abilities did not extend; but he could ride, and fish, and shoot, as well as anybody in the neighbourhood, and those were pretty nearly all his employments. Miss Sharper, too, had grown up to the mature age of fifteen, without acquiring the art of reading and writing very well; she had, in fact, grown beyond the control of a governess before her mother had hired one; and as the eldest, and a rather pretty girl very much flattered by the gentlemen who visited her father, she dressed, and spoke, and was treated as a woman. The other five children were under Fanny's care.

The nurture of children is a delightful task—to those that have never tried it. To teach the young idea how to shoot—what sweeter employment for a human being! To take a child in all its innocence, in all its simplicity,—to quicken its opening faculties, and feed them with knowledge, and rear it into a reasonable being—nothing could be more poetically

beautiful. But it sometimes happens that children are neither very innocent nor very simple, and do not much like the food of knowledge; and a teacher may find that, instead of offering it to a willing recipient, nothing can be done without forcing it down, or beating it in.

CHAPTER IV.

In what measure this was true in the present case, Fanny was able to judge in a very few minutes after waiting on Mrs. Sharper; for that lady, though, as before related, exceedingly liberal and generous, was not one of those persons whose high birth and breeding make them indifferent to the industry of their dependants. She had long practised the useful virtue of getting value for her money, and when Fanny called to commence her labours, she was at once, without circumlocution or formality, taken to the school-room, and set to work. She, probably, had estimated the labour of teaching by her own experience under her mother; but she found a very great difference between a school of lively children, who had

always been suffered to have their own way, and that which consisted of only one pupil, a child taught by a beloved mother. There was an utter absence of order and cleanliness in the school-room; the desk was notched, and chipped, and engraved with rude hieroglyphics; the books were scattered, in dirty fragments, about the room; the walls were inscribed with pothooks and hangers; and the children every moment turned from their lessons to play at push-pin, or at pinching each other. The young folks were not wilfully disobedient to their young mistress; the presence of a stranger made them timid and fearful, and caused them to attend to what she said; but no sooner were her eyes turned from them than they established a conversation on subjects more interesting than literature, which soon became a gabble, like Babel an hour after the confusion of tongues. A good deal of the hope with which Fanny had left home, departed from her bosom in the first morning's teaching. The school-room was so very comfortless, compared with any room in her mother's care. She missed the perfect cleanness and neatness to which she had been always accustomed, and which could throw an air of comfort around the humblest dwelling; but as

she fancied it might be in her power to make improvements in that respect, her annoyance was not lasting. A consideration of greater importance more strongly impressed her mind. On questioning the children as to their former studies, and examining their books, she could not but see that Miss Fagwell had done her duty perfectly. The system on which she had taught appeared to spring from an enlightened mind, as the books contained abundant evidence that it was an accomplished one; and when Fanny compared the attainment of the children with the pains which had been bestowed on them, she almost despaired of effecting by her own endeavours, any part of what she had proposed; she could understand that Mrs. Sharper's children might be very nice children, very fine children, very clever children, while their good qualities might not be exactly of a kind to do credit to a teacher.

At four, Fanny was summoned to dinner. From the death of her father until now she had not once been in what might be called a dinner-party, as her mother was too poor to be able to purchase anything which a friend could condescend to eat; and the poverty which kept away friends kept away invitations, so that every meal

which Fanny had partaken of since her father's death had been strictly a family one. It was, therefore, with some little trepidation that she entered the dining-room, and saw half-a-dozen strangers present, a formal introduction to whom was as terrible as the passage of the Red Sea. But the rudeness of the party spared the greatest part of her confusion—they took no notice of her; Mrs. Sharper did not perform the ceremony of introducing her, and she sat down in a corner, happy to be overlooked through the awkward ten minutes before dinner. But her entrance was not exactly unnoticed, and she found that it was not; for she heard one of the visitors, Doctor Batt, a country apothecary, address Mrs. Sharper, as follows, in no very subdued, though in a drawling tone—

"Oh—a—dear me, Mrs. Sharper—a—surely, if I don't mistake—a—I think I saw—a—Miss Herbert, of Alverley, in the room."

"Yes, Mr. Batt; I have just engaged her, poor thing, as my governess," said Mrs. Sharper, kindly.

"Oh, dear me—indeed!—and so Miss Fagwell is gone?"

"Yes, after the opinion you gave me of her case. But, Mr. Batt, Mrs. Herbert is an old

friend of mine. I really had a great liking for them; and they are so badly off, now, that you see——"

"Oh, that's very kind of you, Mrs. Sharper, —a—very—really. But, don't you think—eh —a—that Miss Herbert is a little—too—eh? —Do you—think——?"

"She is very young, and wont do, like Miss Fagwell; but then, Mr. Batt, consider their unfortunate situation. One must really strain a point to serve one's friends."

"Oh, I see—yes—really! And you really liked the Herberts, did you, Mrs. Sharper? Now, excuse me—a—but I really—now—always thought Mr. Herbert a little, excuse me——"

"Why, Mr. Batt, Mr. Herbert was very much to blame for his extravagance, and ruining his family; but Mrs. Herbert, you know, could not help it; or if she did encourage him, you know, 'tis best to be charitable—she is suffering for it now, and we must not be hard on her."

"Exactly so—a—yes, really; that is my opinion."

Mr. Batt's lingering eloquence was here stopped short by the entrance of a leg of mutton.

Fanny was not so humble or so ignorant as to

take Mrs. Sharper's amiable sentiments for true benevolence; she could not look on herself as an object of charity, while she was labouring, and determined to labour for what she received; and the patronising and humiliating manner in which all her family were spoken of, seemed as utterly uncalled for as it would have been indelicate if it had been just; and the conversation gave her rather a dismal foretaste of servitude. But the pain she felt arose only from Mrs. Sharper's remarks, as she knew Doctor Batt too well by report to care much for his opinion. Mr. Batt's history was similar to that of half our country apothecaries. He was the son of the honest landlady of the Red Cow, a small public-house in Wales, who had starved herself to make him what nature had not designed him to be—a gentleman. She sent him to London after he had worked his way through a druggist's shop; and shortly after he had passed Apothecaries' Hall, returning to the country with empty pockets and a ruined constitution, he happened to stop in a small town, where he formed an acquaintance with the family of a small draper, who, by taking the benefit of the Act, had been able to leave his children a thousand pounds a-piece, which was the first time a member of

the family had left anything, because he was the first that had been able to acquire any creditors. After failing with the eldest daughter, Batt succeeded with the youngest, and married her thousand pounds, with which he commenced practice and gentleman. Now, then, old Mrs. Batt's wishes were accomplished—and she had her reward. She visited her son some time after his marriage; but Mrs. Batt, jun., being very lazy, and the wife of a medical man, was of course too great a lady to sit down with the landlady of the Red Cow, and the poor old woman was sent into the kitchen to dine with the maid; the consequence of which was, that she went home, and died of pure grief. All this was in Batt's favour. He was no longer connected with the Red Cow; and when he had been baptized into the congregation to which his wife's family belonged, and taken the biggest house in the place, he was a very great man in the small circle to which he was admitted. All this was well known to the Herberts, who, whatever their faults, would not countenance profligacy, cruelty, or hypocrisy; and, therefore, not only would not admit Mr. Batt to their house, but would not enter a house in which he visited, which gained for them his small, but violent,

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While the gentlemen were paying their best attentions to the wine, Mrs. Sharper and her daughter went to the school-room to examine the progress of the dear children, and to give their advice as to the best method of tuition, after which, as the children were clad in their Sunday best, Miss Herbert was directed to walk with them into Alverley, an hour or two, for the good of their health. When they returned from their walk, tea was ready, after which Miss Herbert went to the school-room to prepare the books and the lessons for the following day; and when bedtime arrived, she was shewn into a two-bedded room at the top of the house, one of the beds containing a couple of the children, and the other, one, who was to be her bed-fellow.

Such was the first day Miss Herbert spent in teaching.

CHAPTER V.

Miss Herbert had made good use of her time under her mother's care, in pursuing the studies and acquiring the accomplishments which are considered the greatest ornaments of a lady; but she was still a mere child, and, of course, had rather laid the groundwork, than attained anything like a perfect mastery of them. This she well knew, and, in engaging herself as a teacher, had calculated on finding time, when her pupils were out of school, to study for her own advantage. She had always given a certain portion of the day to learning, and employed the rest of it as she chose; and supposing that no plan could be adopted more reasonable or beneficial than her mother's, she had no doubt of being able to carry out the studies she had begun and pursued at home.

She was prepared to make arrangements at once for the accomplishment of this purpose. School hours were from nine till twelve, and from two till four; and this apportionment of the day did not seem unfavourable to her. But on the morning of the second day of her servitude, she made a discovery, which rather abridged her leisure—the governess always took her meals with the children in the school-room, when there was no company. This was not a very pleasant discovery for Fanny, as she found that she would have to attend and watch over the children; but still there was an hour to spare at noon, and a few hours in the evening, which, if she made the best use of, she had little doubt of doing well. The striking of the hour of noon, however, effectually dissipated those hopes, as she was directed to walk with the children exactly an hour, so as to be back at one for dinner. She had little objection to the walk; it was the kind of exercise she most loved; but those that have walked with children know, that they are not exactly the best companions of a person who wishes to think, or to enjoy the absence of thought. When, after a rambling walk of two or three miles, they returned home, dinner was already spread in the

school-room for them, and Fanny had, of course, to fill the office of a servant, by keeping them in order, and seeing that they had a proper quantity of food, by the end of which ceremony, it was time to re-commence their studies.

At four, the children again prepared for a walk, and Fanny was compelled to join them. She found this to be the daily routine of her duties, and was afraid that the periods of her leisure would be very short indeed—an hour or two in the early morning, and a few hours at night. But even this was too liberal an allowance. It has been mentioned that the children were very lively and clever—in their mother's opinion. This was true: but liveliness and cleverness do not always take the direction of study and learning; and Fanny found that their genius lay in giving a sharp reply which their parents thought witty, and strangers insolent, and in the scrambling amusements of the playground, as much as in books. The children were indeed so lively, that it required the whole of Fanny's time during the day to keep them to anything like a proper attention to their appointed tasks, aided as they were in their habitual liveliness by the occasional visits of Miss Sharper and her eldest brother, who were not so far removed

from childhood as to be above engaging the children in various kinds of amusement, not by any means assistant to study. Fanny therefore had no time in the day to prepare their books, measure the march of their acquirements, and make the arrangements necessary for further progression. She found herself compelled to rise early in the morning to accomplish this necessary labour, and spent her time until the formal school hour in setting copies, arranging lessons in grammar and spelling, appointing problems in arithmetic, drawing plans for needle-work, fingering lessons for the piano, translating French books into English to be translated back again by her pupils, and half a hundred other tasks, rendered necessary by her want of leisure during the day, and the innumerable accomplishments which Mrs. Sharper was determined her beloved children should acquire. Thus, from an early hour in the morning until six in the evening, Fanny found her time fully engaged, and the only relaxation or self-improvement she could expect was in the evening.

But from various causes, even the hours of evening slipped out of her possession. She did certainly spend two or three evenings in the school-room, with her books and music, very

well pleased with her employment; but Mrs. Sharper having a motherly feeling towards her, and perhaps some little feeling towards her own interests, fancied the young creature must be very dull to sit moping there when the dear children were gone to bed, and took her some needlework as a pleasant amusement.

Fanny was too modest and gentle to refuse it, although she could have very well spared such a proof of kindness; and she worked so neatly and rapidly, that of course Mrs. Sharper repeated the act of benevolence. All articles of female apparel, besides bonnets and gowns, were made in the house; but though the good lady was very domestic, her talents did not lie in the direction of needlework, while Miss Sharper was too fine a lady to do any kind of work; and, therefore, it may be supposed, that in a family of that size, there was a good deal to be done by the person that did work. But besides all the under-garments of the female branches of the family, there were certain articles of male apparel which were of the same description of manufacture; and the lively children would get the strings off their pinafores, and the buttons off their other garments, and occasionally make a few rents, and all these repairs fell on Miss

Herbert. The servant was busy in the kitchen, or was tired, or going out, and Miss Herbert was rather dull, poor thing! and would be thankful for something to amuse her. There was no lack of that kind of amusement. Every day a fresh job was given to her—even while she was teaching the children she had work on her lap—and scarcely a day passed when the fair Miss Sharper did not visit the school-room to get the governess to make an alteration in her dress, in her bonnet, or in some other article of finery, sitting by her and doing nothing besides giving directions as to how the things were to look. The children did not learn Latin; the governess had not time to learn how to teach it. She seemed in a fair way to lose even the accomplishments which her youth had been spent in acquiring. The only improvement which she appeared likely to acquire, was in the art and mystery of a sempstress or dressmaker, which her mother certainly had not marked out as her profession.

CHAPTER VI.

THE particulars just related of Fanny's situation were not perhaps such as to suit the tastes formed by her past life; but while the object of her leaving home was unaccomplished, she was content to bear a few disagreeable circumstances. That Mrs. Sharper was satisfied with her governess scarcely requires to be said, since she put forth all her abilities, and devoted all her time to give satisfaction, made no complaints and asked no favours. It must have required a much worse woman than Mrs. Sharper, to make Miss Herbert's situation more uncomfortable than the common habits of the family necessarily made it; and Fanny, perhaps, might have remained with her young charges until they had become no longer young—until, in

fact, they had become men and women, when she might have fallen quietly into the station of lady's-maid, but that even in this amiable family she found an enemy.

It has been stated that Miss Sharper was rather pretty; but I need not allude to that, as I was not about to say that she was admired by the other sex, but that she was rather inclined to admire them, and every one knows that it is not necessary a young lady should be handsome to do that. Miss Sharper, at the mature age of fifteen, the eldest young lady of the family, considered herself at the proper point of life to take on herself that important business of women—love! A very curious book might be written on the thoughts and emotions of a virgin from childhood until womanhood; from the time when she first thinks about love until she feels it. The rambles of a butterfly over a meadow brilliant with the first flowers of spring, is not more circuitous and discursive than her speculations on the nice young men within half-a-dozen miles. But as we have to do with Miss Herbert rather than with Miss Sharper, it will be sufficient just to say that the latter young lady, however deficient in scholastic acquirements, had a perfect knowledge of the science of re-

spectable young men, nor was there a squire's son, a lawyer's articled clerk, or a surgeon's assistant, within five miles, whose dress, and altitude, and circumference she could not accurately describe. In such cases, of course, young ladies require a female friend or confidante; and as Miss Sharper had not one in the immediate neighbourhood whom she could trust, and was too great a lady to exalt one of the maids to such an elevation, Miss Herbert seemed a providential gift to supply her wants. I do not mean that Miss Sharper loved Miss Herbert. The gentleness and beauty of the governess sometimes threw even Miss Sharper's charms into the shade, and gained for her certain civilities which the young lady envied—to say nothing of the accomplishments, which Miss Sharper hated because she did not possess any herself. But in spite of all this, the convenience of having a confidential and trustworthy companion in the house, was such as to make her exceedingly civil while she was endeavouring to establish the connexion. Scarcely a day passed when Miss Sharper did not go into the school-room to converse with the governess; but Monday was of course the favourite day,

because they could talk over the past day's experience at church. I wish I could say that the text or the sermon was the subject of these conversations, but I am sorry to confess that such was not the case. The eloquence of the old rector touched not the heart of Miss Sharper: she was interested more in the young curate who read the lessons, and by the male part of the congregation under thirty years of age.

"Well, Miss Herbert," would the young lady say, "what did you think of Mr. Markham, yesterday?"

"I thought he read very well," replied Fanny.

"Read!—he read very well! Oh, I dare say," quoth the young lady contemptuously; "but I mean, how do you think he looked?"

"He seemed to be very well."

"Very well! Pooh, Miss Herbert, don't be stupid! Don't you think he looked handsome? Did you ever see such white hands!—and then, when he turns up his eyes, don't you think he looks divinely?"

"I did not notice it," said Fanny.

"No!—that wont do!" replied Miss Sharper; "you can't make me believe that you don't

notice such a nice-looking man as Mr. Markham, unless there's somebody else that you looked at!"

"I don't know that I looked at any one besides Dr. Lector."

"Ah, that's a good one! Old Dr. Lector! Why, he's sixty and more, and has got a wife and I don't know how many children. By the bye, do you know who that young man was in Mr. Meeton's pew?"

"I don't know which that is."

"But didn't you observe a tall, dark young man with jet black hair, and two rings on his right hand, and a gold watch?"

"I did not, indeed."

"Dear me! Well, I never!—But you always give me such answers. What, in the name of wonder, do you go to church for?"

Such was the general style of the conversation; and so it generally ended, Fanny giving no answer, as none was required, to the last interrogatory. But after many conversations with the same unsatisfactory result, it happened one day that Miss Sharper asked, with some little hesitation, if Miss Herbert would bring a packet for her from Alverley when she went down with the children. Fanny, expressing

her willingness to do it, asked where she was to call for it, when Miss Sharper said she need not call as the packet would be given to her if she went into the town. Shortly afterwards Fanny went into Alverley, rather puzzled at the meaning of this strange communication, and looking about inquiringly for the person that was to bring her the mysterious packet. She looked in vain: no person spoke to her. As she passed an entry by a doctor's shop, she did, indeed, observe a young man standing in it, who she fancied beckoned her to walk in; but as the person was a stranger, and she unaccustomed to receive such invitations, she thought she must be mistaken.

When she reached home, Miss Sharper was on the look out to speak to her, and asked hurriedly for the packet. Fanny said she had not received one.

"Not brought one!" said Miss Sharper, looking blank; "why, which way did you go?"

"I went up the High-street and back," replied Fanny.

"And did you pass by Dr. Skelton's?"

"Yes."

"Well, and didn't you see anybody?—didn't you?"

"Yes, now you remind me of it, I remember I saw a young man in the passage who beckoned."

"Well?"

"I did not suppose any young man could believe I would follow him up a passage because he beckoned to me, and I walked on."

"You did!"

"Certainly."

"Oh, Miss Herbert, how dull you are! You must go down again—you can easily find an excuse. Why, that young man had a letter for me."

"A letter!"

"Yes; I wouldn't miss it for all the world. You must go down for it at once."

"But why could he not send it? Mr. Skelton's servant passes our house every day."

"Send it!—oh, you stupid creature! What, and let it get into Ma's hands! A pretty thing that would be! You must go down for it. You can buy some cakes for the children, you know; or anything will do for an excuse."

"You must pardon me, Miss Sharper—I cannot go."

"You must go, Miss Herbert; I would not lose the letter for ever so much."

"I cannot go, indeed, if the letter be such as you wish to conceal from your mother."

"Do you know who you speak to, Miss Herbert? Arn't you our servant? Ma pays you wages, and I'm to be obeyed as well as she. You forget yourself—you don't live at the Hall now, and Pa could buy you all, fifty times over, and if you don't go, I'll make the house too hot to hold you."

"I cannot obey you, Miss Sharper, in anything which I suppose your mother would not approve of."

"And I suppose you'll go and tell Ma everything I've said. But I don't care—you can't prove it."

"I have nothing to tell," said Fanny.

"You may tell what you like; I aint afraid of you. I ask you once more—will you go, as I bid you?"

"I cannot."

"Well, then, I'll soon send you packing from our house, I can tell you."

This threat was not executed immediately; but if Fanny had been very apprehensive of it, she might have been somewhat alarmed by the continued coolness, or supercilious arrogance, of Miss Sharper through the two or three subse-

quent weeks. This was displayed not only in offensiveness of manner, or probably Fanny might have borne it with composure, through her perfect comprehension of her young mistress; but, unfortunately, Miss Sharper was in a position to mortify her, and was possessed of sufficient ability to make the best use of it.

She commenced her pleasing labours by taking to her needlework of the humblest kind in very large quantities to execute, at which Fanny was obliged to work in her bed-room several hours after the rest of the family were asleep, by which her cheeks became pale and thin, and her health affected; but she laboured on without murmuring. She could not complain to any one besides her mother, if she had been disposed to complain; and her mother was the last person to whom she would have complained, because it was only for her sake that she had gone into the world. But Miss Sharper did not stop at this: everything that could be quietly endured was insufficient to satisfy her; and as Miss Herbert did not complain at over-working, she varied her employments, by sending her into the town on errands for herself and Ma, and sometimes for the servants, some of which were of a character by no means suitable to a delicate young lady,

though Fanny obeyed them from a sentiment of duty.

Miss Sharper was too well skilled in the polite art of mortifying to be beaten by the patience of a victim; and when these indirect attacks failed, she had recourse to more personal methods, which could not fail to be successful. She entered the school-room every day, while the children were at their studies, and examining their books, told them that she was sorry to observe that they had not improved since Miss Fagwell had left. She also suggested to Miss Herbert various improvements in her method of teaching; and when Fanny shewed, as certainly was very easy, that her own method was better, the young lady desired her not to be impertinent or she would speak to Ma. This threat was undoubtedly put in execution; for Mrs. Sharper also came into the school-room, and though entirely ignorant of everything taught, beyond mere reading and writing, she suggested the very things which Miss Sharper had previously suggested, and insisted on compliance. The consequence of this was that the children, although they did not cease to love Miss Herbert, ceased to fear her; and though they did not openly rebel against her authority, or obsti-

nately disobey her, they received her commands with indifference, and refused obedience in a playful and smiling manner, which was not less fatal to improvement than downright rebellion. Nor were these remarks made only before the children. Mrs. Sharper, proud as she was of her clever progeny, as before related, always introduced them to the visitors to display their accomplishments, on which occasions, as Fanny was present, Miss Sharper was very brilliant in her bitterness, imputing all that they knew to their dear Miss Fagwell, who, unfortunately, had left through sickness, while all the blundering and apparent ignorance were laid to the charge of poor Miss Herbert, who was not used to teaching, and was young and inconsiderate. At dinner, also, when there were visitors, Fanny was made to feel her inferiority to those around her. She was always placed with the two eldest of her pupils; and if she appeared likely to receive any civil attention from a visitor, Miss Sharper was sure to say something that would prevent her receiving pleasure from it, by ordering her to help Master John, or to move Miss Maria's plate, or to wipe Miss Eliza's nose, or to take out Master Thomas and wash his hands, or wondering that Miss Herbert did not pay more

attention to the children. Nay, if she could possibly bring in the subject, she would make some flattering remark on the present proprietor of Alverley Hall, and the alterations he had made, especially in those things most venerated by the Herberts. But the favourite and most galling remark was when a visitor, observing the piano, asked Miss Sharper to play; for, as she was innocent of all knowledge of the fascinating science, she replied in bitter disdain, though with extreme politeness of manner—"I don't play, sir—I think it a great waste of time, unless for governesses; but Miss Herbert plays a little, and she is always very willing to oblige gentlemen."

But if the occasional visits of Miss Sharper to the school-room, begun in a desire to obtain a confidential friend, were continued by spite and revenge, Mr. Richard Sharper's visits were continued from the original motive—sheer idleness, or a lurking and awkward admiration of the young and pretty governess. He was a rough and clumsy specimen of humanity, not likely to make a very favourable impression on a gentle and delicate young lady; nor were his conversation and employments in his daily visit to the school-room of such a nature as to make her insensible of his external roughness. He

generally engaged the children in some game as soon as he entered the school, and when that lost its interest, he gave Miss Herbert a history of his last day's hunt, or coursing, or shooting, or rat-hunting, with an account of the mighty deeds of his horses, dogs, and gun, conveyed in a phraseology suited to the field, the stable, and the tap-room, and abounding in those forcible expletives which Johnson so strangely omitted from his Dictionary, although they are supposed to give such a peculiar character to the English language. When the sources of this eloquence had been drained to the last drop, and left him without a subject on which to hang a word, he generally amused himself by setting his terrier at the cat, if she happened to have followed the children to the school-room; and if she was not there, or contrived to escape, a conflict between two of the children was as amusing as that between the other animals, and a few rounds of boxing gave him unsullied pleasure. Now, though all this was exceedingly pleasant to the young gentleman, and indeed highly fashionable, if we may judge by the majority of young men in the present day, it did not greatly please Miss Herbert, who had been brought up in a very quiet manner at the apron-

strings of a gentle and delicate mother, and she would have been very glad if Mr. Richard Sharper and his sister had left her to do her best for the younger children without the embarrassment of their assistance. But out of this circumstance Miss Sharper contrived to accomplish her schemes against the governess. One afternoon, when Mr. Richard Sharper was as usual, lounging in the school-room, Mrs. Sharper entered with her daughter, and desiring Mr. Richard to walk down as she wished to speak to Miss Herbert, the good lady said—

"Miss Herbert, I wish to speak a word with you, seriously."

Fanny looked up seriously, dismissed the child at her side, and attended to Mrs. Sharper, who continued—

"I am sorry to have to complain, Miss Herbert; but, out of a strong wish for your welfare, I must give you a piece of advice."

Fanny did not express her thanks for this kindness, but waited patiently for the advice.

"I consider you like one of my own children," said Mrs. Sharper; "and really I cannot see you pursuing a dangerous line of conduct without giving you a warning."

"Pray what have I done?" asked Fanny.

"Circumstances alter cases, Miss Herbert; and you ought to recollect that you are not at the Hall now."

"I do recollect that constantly," replied Fanny.

"Yes; but you ought to know that what would be right there wont do in your present situation. It has been brought to my notice, Miss Herbert, that my son is in the habit of spending a good deal of his time in this school-room with you; and I must warn you that you wont do well to encourage such a thing, for whatever we might have thought when you were at the Hall, I must tell you that no good can come of it now."

"I do not exactly understand what you mean," said Fanny; "but I am sure that I very much wish Mr. Sharper would not come into the school-room, as I find it very difficult to keep the children's attentions to their studies when he is here."

"Oh, yes! that's very well, Miss Herbert; but my son was not in the habit of spending his time here when poor dear Miss Tagwell was governess. I know very well what the feelings of young persons are, and I dare say you see, as every body must, that my son is a very fine,

spirited young man; but I would have you consider the consequences of such proceedings before it is too late. Mr. Sharper will never consent that his son should have any honourable motives, and therefore you must see that you're only going to your own ruin."

"I'm so sorry for Miss Herbert," said Miss Sharper, with a sharp glance of bitter triumph.

"I am afraid I do not understand what harm I have done," said Fanny; "I endeavour to teach the children to the best of my ability; and I should really be obliged by your ordering Mr. Richard not to enter the school-room."

"But, Ma," interrupted Miss, "they could meet in the fields, or anywhere, when the children are walking."

"To be sure, my love. I have done my duty to you, Miss Herbert, in giving you this warning; for I could not bear to see you ruined, any more than I could bear to see my son throw himself away, and you must therefore take the consequences."

Mrs. Sharper then walked away, leaving Fanny somewhat puzzled as to the real nature of the accusation made against her, and very much pained at the tone of reproof now, for the first time in her life, addressed to her. The

insolence of Miss Sharper had given her little pain; she could not but despise a creature so utterly unlike in mind what her revered mother had taught her a good woman should be, and so utterly unskilled in every accomplishment which she had been taught distinguished the lady; and the petulance of such a creature affected her no more than that of a servant, or any other ignorant and vulgar inferior. But Mrs. Sharper's position made her opinion important; and her displeasure was the cause of such distress and wonder, that Fanny seized the very earliest opportunity of visiting her mother, to relate to her all that had happened; when Mrs. Herbert, knowing rather more of the world than her daughter did, and discerning in the complaint an accusation which might be employed not only to distress her child at present, but to shock her delicacy and destroy some of the feelings which it had been a principal object of her life to implant, at once resolutely insisted that Fanny should never again set her foot within Mrs. Sharper's door—a determination probably not unpleasing to Fanny, and certainly very gratifying to Miss Sharper.

END OF VOL I.

T. C. Savill, Printer, 107, St. Martin's Lane.

THE HERBERTS

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "ELPHINSTONE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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1842.

BOOK THE FIFTH

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

If you, my dear reader, will examine any list of books published within the last twenty years, you will be amazed to find how great a proportion of them have been undertaken in ignorance or defiance of the very best laws of authorship. You will find nine out of ten on subjects of notoriety, not of importance; on the concussions of society which have made most noise, not on those which have effected the greatest changes; on moral questions of the greatest popularity, not those of the greatest moment; on men whose names have been heard, not those whose lives are the most instructive. The converse of the true spirit of authorship seems to have become universal; instead of studying, and treating luminously,

and exhibiting to the world those subjects which have been neglected, modern authors, in every walk, take up, and treat without any luminousness, only those subjects which are already in the mouths of the people. It matters not whether the subject has derived its popularity from the vastness of its importance, or from an accidental circumstance: the fact that people have heard of the subject is sufficient to engage authors to write about it. Not an actor dies, after strutting in the dignity of ten pounds per week, but his memoirs are spread over ten times as much paper as an ancient took to record the work of the highest of the world's immortals; not a sprig of nobility, who has wriggled himself up to a gold stick in court or an office in government, of such note as to have the privilege of being kicked out with a ministry, or to be pensioned by it; not a martinet, whose family was rich enough to make him a field-officer, can be allowed to slip quietly into the grave of common men, without a printed history of their honours being given to the world; not a strumpet, whose vices were fortunate, can take her guilt from the world, but a dozen first-rate authors discuss her piety and generosity; not a criminal is sentenced at the

Old Bailey, whose name the papers have proclaimed in every corner, but his memory is embalmed in two octavos of superfine paper, and type cast expressly for the purpose. Within twenty years there have been a thousand volumes published on the adherents of governments; ten thousand on other vicious and criminal persons, whose wickedness alone distinguished them from the mass; and twenty thousand on men whose claim to notice for good or evil is the sole fact that they were at Waterloo.

In every class of writing this notoriety is substituted for greatness. In history, writers take the revolutions of Rome and Greece, not because they are not understood, but because they are talked about; in morals, they give the outlines of a vice which makes most noise and is most abhorred, not that which the circumstances of men make them most liable to; in novels, they write about lords and ladies, not because their hearts are better or worse than others, but because coronets and country-houses are in the minds of the populace. And all this would be very well, if authors would penetrate into the spirit of their subject; but the very reason why they choose such subjects,

is a reason why they treat them superficially—external and visible appearances, because they are recognised by the vulgar, recommend them to the authors, and the works are written in direct reference to that principle. But how false is all this, and how puerile! It is the easiest thing in the world to write a book on a man, an event, or a feeling, which is notorious. The revolutions of empires, the exaltations of men, have always certain superficial qualities which are easily described, and which will interest. But this description leaves all that is important untold: there is something which appears beneath the dignity of the pen, both in the meanest man and the highest, more important than robes, or station, or form, and is more interesting to all men; but it is more difficult to describe. Yes; I will not speak of courts, or theatres, or camps, or senates, or any other scene of actors. Follow me to the humblest form of human nature; jump into a railway carriage, and when you are at least a hundred miles from London, get down at a second-rate station-house; then walk half-a-dozen miles along the old turnpike road, when you will turn up a green lane, and after walking half-a-dozen miles further, just as you get to

the brow of a little hill, you will behold in the bottom, about half a mile off, a village, consisting of a dozen or two of hovels, into whose unmacadamised streets neither steam-carriage, mail-coach, nor other vehicle, less sturdy than a forest-waggon, ever attempted to penetrate. The village lies in an amphitheatre of paltry hills, enclosing twenty acres of soil. Look at the clump of cottages; there is no beauty in their form—there is no grace in their arrangement; they have nothing which can claim attention, save that the rude outline excites thoughts of living man; for though no human form may be visible on the green plain, or beside the huts overshadowed with trees, yet through their branches columns of white smoke curl up to the sky, and suggest thoughts of the home-comforts of the fire-side. But if you look closer, the village contains no house that you would sit down in; there is no rich man, no great man, no learned man—no person lives here that you would wish to converse with. Yet neither Rome nor Greece had a renown or a history dearer to the hearts of its inhabitants than that connected with our humble village. The people know nothing of the world's Napoleons, Newtons, and Shaksperes; they never

heard of them or of their pursuits; but they boast the best ringer, the best ploughman, the best cricketter, or the best fiddler, for six miles round. The public spirit of that knot of clowns has sent its young men out to struggle for fame against other villages; the struggle has been kept up with unceasing interest for centuries, the history of which is preserved in the records of village tradition. The young men talk of what has been done before them, and the old men are eloquent with the deeds of the great men which they have known in their time. Yes, the history of their triumphs and defeats, their marriages and deaths, the successions of ministers, the conduct of the farmer and his family, is as full of incident as the history of a nation, and is as important to them as a loftier history to loftier people, as it is suited to their capacity and feeling. Nay, the history of every village in the universe would be exquisitely interesting to every one, if it were written by a villager who thoroughly felt its importance.

But not only has every village its own separate history, utterly distinct and different in its details from any other: events are comprised in a less space than a village. A cottage is as interesting as a world. Look at yonder hovel—

a cube whose sides contain four yards respectively—it is nothing but four mud walls and a flat roof, through which penetrates not only the rain and the lightning of the tempest, but the dew of the mild evening, and the faintest brightening of morning. One might fancy that the commonest blank wall could have as interesting a history as that wretched hovel. Yet as rags cover a human heart as well as fine linen and purple, a mud cottage shelters man as well as a palace; and the history of that cot, bleak and desolate as it seems, perched up on that bit of shattered rock, and apparently a prey for the very first gale a little ruder than common, contains the materials for a hundred novels and romances; and the man that could comprehend his subject, would make them as interesting and instructive as those of which the scene is laid in a palace, or the battle-field of nations. Think of the passions and thoughts, the multiplied interests that have sanctified the place. All that is most interesting in the mightiest, had happened to the inhabitants of that cottage—hopes, fears, ambition, disappointment, prosperity, adversity, every event which is an era in the minds of man and woman—every circumstance which creates food for sweet and bitter recollection, and which

forms individual consciousness, from the first welcome cry of a firstborn, through the plays of childhood, the love of youth, the paternity of manhood, and so on up to gray-haired age, sitting idly in the chimney-corner, and fading calmly into eternity. Many of the younger branches of that most humble house have gone out into the wide world to push their fortunes: they may have found comforts and luxuries elsewhere; but they never find anything that can erase the memory of delights enjoyed in that cottage. Wherever they go—whether in some spot more favoured by nature they find a partner and a cot, whether they add to the grandeur and partake the pleasures of a British palace, whether they luxuriate in the glorious climate and gorgeous splendour of the East, or make a fortune in our own island—wherever they go, they turn a longing eye towards the sacred spot, endeared to them by a world of feeling, and look forward to that blessed moment when they shall go home. Yet that home is but four poor mud walls, and a roof open to heaven. Yes, even the history of a cottage is as interesting as the history of a nation, and one cottage differs as much from another, as nation does from nation.

But even the interests and passions of a cottage, or of a family, are more extensive and numerous than a writer ought to require, or than he could do justice to. Any individual man or woman, would be an abundant theme for the most skilful pen. The creation of a world is not more wonderful than the creation of a man; nor is the history of a world more strange, more eventful, more abstruse, or more interesting than the history of a human heart. Look at a mob of cockneys, or of clowns, and in all the thousands you behold you shall not find two whose passions, principles, intellect, education, and experience are alike—nay, take all the family of man, and you shall sooner find ten thousand perfectly alike in form and features, than two persons whose lives are a similar relation. For, think over your own history—recollect the events which have left their mark on your mind, and made you what you are, and tell me, is there a person in the world who knows what you have done, and thought, and felt, or who has done, and thought, and felt like you. There is not one. And that which is true of yourself is true of all. Every individual in a mob of thousands or millions is an exquisite machine of which there is no copy—a machine infinitely more wonderful than the series of

bodily organs which, however beautifully they work, are common to the race, from Adam until now; the thinking and feeling machine had probably no perfect type in all the descendants of our great forefather.

Had there been some process by which to transfer to visible language all the thoughts that passed through the minds, and all the feelings that actuated the hearts of Buonaparte, of Virgil, of Bacon, of Byron, we should at once leave their written biographies to the trunk-makers. And, believe me, the history of the rudest clown—not a description of his hut and his labours by a genteel author, but a downright history of his heart, written by himself, or so written as to be a correct and perfect record of all the feelings and thoughts created by, and creating the events of his life—would be as interesting as the life of a hero. And as the life of one, would be the lives of all the millions of the world, since every human being is a mass, a world as it were, of thought and experience, complete in itself, and unconnected with any other. Yes, wonderful it is to think, when we look on a large body of people, that every individual in it is what we are, a mass of thought, of feeling, and of memory, and has his own peculiar

world of ideas, which are untouched by, and distinct from, all the masses around him!

How much pathos, how much grandeur, how much simplicity, have been buried in the earth without a record; how much is there that we neglect or cannot comprehend! A glorious day will it be for British authors, when they see in a nobleman something more than a coronet and an order; in an actor, something more than the sock or buskin; in a warrior, more than his sword and helmet; in a statesman, more than his place; in a felon, more than his crime;—when from under all these accidents shall be produced the mind and heart, the essential humanity of the individuals, exhibited to their fellow-men for wonder, for admiration, for terror, for sorrow, for pity, for warning.

CHAPTER II.

WHILE William Herbert was in the extreme destitution described in the third book, consequent on the utter failure of his literary schemes, he happened one day to take up a newspaper, in which was an advertisement of a charitable institution for clothing the poor, with a list of the contributors. He glanced through the long array of lords, ladies, squires, and misters, with each a sum of money tagged to the end of his name. It is so interesting to read of pounds given away by one's richer brethren, when one has not a single sixpence in all the world; as a description of the turtle, venison, and claret, of a Lord Mayor's feast is so intensely interesting to the hungry wretch who could make a hearty dinner on a dish of workhouse soup. After

looking over this assemblage of charitable persons, William, having nothing better to do, turned for amusement to the other news, and at length came to a list of advertisements, of a dozen or two of Trafalgar, Waterloo, and Wellington Houses, for the sale of articles of linen-drapery, which, as indeed the advertisements candidly stated, were to be sold at ruinously low prices. This, however, was not very interesting to William, since he had no money to invest in "Cheap Silks and Calicoes," and would have preferred a good dinner to all the purple and fine linen in the world; but he remarked that one of these houses—namely, *The Wellington House*, 980, Oxford Street, was kept by Messrs. Wiggins and Co., whose name he fancied that he had seen in the catalogue of the donors to the above-mentioned charity, and on turning back to it, he saw indeed that the Cornelius Wiggins, of *Wellington House*, 980, *Oxford Street*, was advertized, both as a linen-draper and a man of charity, in the same paper.

William had very little of the sordid in his nature; and any act of generosity or liberality pleased him; it will not be wondered at, therefore, that he read through Mr. Wiggins's advertisement with great interest, as something relating

to a very excellent man. From this paragraph, William discovered, to his great delight, that Mr. Wiggins must be a very great man, since the stock in trade alone, consisting of many hundred thousand pieces of linen, lace, silks, and every article that could be made on the loom, must be worth a prince's ransom. William was very glad to find that virtue sometimes met with its reward; but an announcement at the bottom of the advertisement pleased him more than anything, and was as follows, "Several young gentlemen wanted as assistants in the above establishment." William Herbert, to be sure, was not able to distinguish calico from Irish linen, and was utterly unacquainted with the particular virtues and excellences of gingham and French muslin, and, therefore, might seem not very well adapted to be an assistant in the profitable sale of those articles; but although a very modest young man, he could not help knowing that his education had qualified him for more important duties than measuring yards of tape and flannel, and he had been so long taught to consider himself at least one degree above every kind of tradesman, that he did not once doubt his own fitness for the station, which was inexpressibly inviting, as it seemed to assure him bread.

William at once directed his course towards *The Wellington House* establishment, but as he approached it he was considerably mortified to find the house, which altogether was a very brilliant affair, ticketted from cellar to attic with the words "Selling Off," in letters of colossal magnitude. This a little damped his ardent anticipations of personal benefit, as well as checked his exultation in the occasional prosperity of virtue, since it seemed very doubtful whether he would obtain any situation under a gentleman who was obliged to sell off, and it appeared evident that Mr. Wiggins's over-generosity had led him into his present distress. Yet William felt himself to be in such terrible circumstances, that the remotest chance of bettering them ought not to be neglected, and he was desirous also to look once on the face of the man of beneficence, and he entered Wellington House. The shop was a very large one indeed, although rather plain compared with the assemblage of magnificent colours in the window. The shop, indeed, consisted of the whole ground floor of the house, the front being looked into from the street, and the back consisting of a range of windows of ground glass, to let in a little muddy light from the couple of square

yards behind the house, which were dignified by the name of "The Court." The walls of this large room were of course divided into niches, stuffed full of all imaginable productions of the loom; following the sinuosities of which were a range of mahogany counters, and between the two a regiment of obliging, but consequential-looking young gentlemen, rather under the middle size, dressed in clothes of a very fashionable cut, with remarkably white shirts——wristbands and collars to hide all conclusions, and every one adorned with a head of elaborate curls, which even the perpetual bowing did no more discompose than it would those other polite gentlemen — the Mandarins in grocers' windows. The fronts of the counters were lined with cane-bottomed chairs, every one of which contained a lady, when William entered; and for one moment he was at a loss to whom to address himself, since it appeared that every individual young gentleman had attached himself to an individual lady, with a devotion that rendered him, as it were, insensible to the existence of all others; so that if William had been very fanciful instead of very hungry that morning, he might have thought of the time when every knight was bound to

perform such strange feats to shew his allegiance to his lady-love, as we read of in those truest historians—the poets and romancers.

But neither Spenser nor Ariosto occurred to William in the draper's shop; and the hesitation as to whom he should address, which I mentioned above, did not last many moments; for a young gentleman, cut out after the same pattern as those he had already seen, sprang from some invisible door, advanced, with a smiling countenance, behind the row of young gentlemen already engaged, until he faced Mr. Herbert, when he insinuated himself between two of his fellows, looked earnestly at William to attract his attention, and as he drew nigh to the counter, spread open the fore-finger and thumb of both hands, put the tip of each perpendicularly on the counter, laid the weight of his whole body on them, bent kindly and confidentially towards him, and looking very serious said, in the low, gentle tones of the truest affection—

"Good morning to you, sir—a very fine morning, sir. What shall I have the pleasure of shewing you, sir?"

"I wish to see Mr. Wiggins, if you please," William replied.

"Thank you, sir; oh, yes, to be sure, immediately," the young gentleman replied. "May I ask you, sir, if you wish to see him on business?"

"Yes, on business," William replied, rather at a loss to know why one man should wish to see another, unless he had some kind of business with him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the young gentleman, "Mr. Wiggins is—rather—that is—he is engaged about this time. I should be happy to shew you anything myself, sir; and I flatter myself you could do business with me to advantage; or, if your business be private, sir, I should be happy to introduce you to Mr. Scorum, Mr. Wiggins's principal secretary, what is his confidential—quite."

William was not aware that great men in trade in these latter days, however sharply they may look after their profits, sometimes dislike to soil their hands with the dirty details of business, so that he did not know that there could be any impropriety in wishing to see the master. This he was the more anxious to do, as it was the name Wiggins, and not the name Scorum, which was in the list of the charitable; and William knew just sufficient of the world to be

aware that, though a master might be a very liberal and excellent man, it did not follow that his servants must possess the same character. He, therefore, persisted in his request, and at length the young gentleman led the way through the shop, and up a circular flight of stairs, at the top of which he opened a door, and led William into a magnificent room, where sat Mr. Cornelius Wiggins, the great linen-draper. This room excelled in grandeur of proportion, and splendour of fitting up, all that William had ever seen. The mansion of his father had something about it to warm the heart, for the furniture and embellishments of the family mansion were of that plain and solid kind, which put one in mind of comfort more than of fashion; and though they did not want for splendour, the splendour was generally of that antique kind which is so grateful to the supporters of an ancient name, and so envied and unattainable by the rich upstart. In the drawing-room of Wellington House there was everything that money could purchase, and everything was in good condition, but everything seemed quite new. The paper on the walls was a delicate mixture of pink and silver, seemingly upheld by a cornice of heavy gold work, all of which looked

infinitely finer than the old tapestry of *The Hall*. The floor was covered with a Turkey carpet, containing only one flower or pattern, exactly the size of the room. There were two fire-places, each with its polished grate decorated with designs in bronze from the antique, and surrounded by a colossal structure of white marble, embodying the fronts of two of the most celebrated porticoes of ancient Greece. A dozen of tables, of different shapes and materials, were placed in various parts of the room, about which were a profusion of couches, ottomans, and sofas, adorned with crimson and purple velvet, embellished with designs elaborately executed with the needle, and innumerable chairs of such variety of form that they seemed like samples of the distorted fancies of a hundred individuals who had much more money than taste; some of them round-backed, some square, some oval, some Gothic, some Norman, some of no definable shape; some high-backed, some low, some upright, some slanting, and some moveable at pleasure into every kind of angle; some were of mahogany, some of rosewood, some of ivory; and the sitting parts, of every variety of form, were as gay as the rest, with all that could be done with satin, cotton, cane, wood, wool, and velvet.

Three or four first-rate historical paintings, a couple of magnificent pier-glasses, and three sets of gigantic hands in or-molu, grasping the window-curtains, which were of rose-coloured silk, completed the furniture of the room, which seemed worthy the occupation of the Queen of the Fairies, or that which suggests all the most beautiful ideas which enter the mind of man—a fair and accomplished woman.

But there was very little of the fairy-like about Mr. Wiggins; and, indeed, William was somewhat disappointed at the first sight of that gentleman, since, in speculation on his benevolent character, he had conjured up a thousand pictures of tall men, with grey hair and beneficent smiles, not one of which agreed entirely with the reality before him. Mr. Wiggins was a rather short man, with a pale face, and long black hair, brushed smooth over his forehead, dressed in a suit of well-brushed black, with white cravat, and high shirt collar. But if William felt that his anticipations of the person of a benevolent man were not borne out by present experience, he was as much surprised at Mr. Wiggins's personal appearance and apparent habits, contrasted with the splendour of the room; for that gentleman was sitting at

one of the tables, on which stood a pewter pot of porter, an upright tobacco-box with a black-amoor's head on the top, with a clay-pipe at its side, while a very forcible reminiscence of tobacco pervaded the room. But all this rather pleased William than otherwise, since it proved to him that the benevolent man, although the owner of the great riches about him, was one contented with the humble pleasures of inferior men.

It must not be supposed that the last two pages of description were acquired by William as slowly as they have been written, or read; for everything here set down he discovered at a single glance round the room, as he walked from the door to the table at which Mr. Wiggins was seated.

"I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Wiggins, I presume?" William inquired.

"That's my name," replied Mr. Wiggins.

"I believe, sir, this is your advertisement," said William, displaying the advertisement of Wellington House, which had created such hopes in his mind.

"That is the advertisement of this firm," replied Mr. Wiggins; "but I never attend to the retail trade myself. I will ring for Mr.

Bloxom, my secretary, who will be happy to receive your commands."

"Pardon me," William replied, "pardon me, sir; but my business is with you. I am no stranger to the benevolence of your character; and I would rather appeal to you than to your secretary."

"I—I understand—a—" said Mr. Wiggins, with considerable hesitation; "benevolent—if you come with a case of distress—a—I am sorry, but really, sir, so many calls—a——"

"You entirely misconceive my object," interrupted William; "I come to you on my own account only; and I should not doubt my success with a gentleman of your liberality, if I had not had the pain of discovering that you are selling-off."

"Selling-off!" cried Mr. Wiggins, in a tone of astonishment, not unmixed with anger, and rising suddenly from the sofa, as he spoke: "I don't understand you, sir! What do you mean?"

"Why, sir," replied William, "when I approached your house, in consequence of seeing this advertisement, I found it placarded with notices that you are selling-off; from which I

conclude, that fortune has not been so kind to you as your benevolence deserves; and this discovery was doubly unpleasant to me, since I came to offer you my services."

"Services!" cried Mr. Wiggins, in a tone of very decided astonishment. "Services!—what do you mean?"

"I mean," replied William, "to offer my services as an assistant."

Mr. Wiggins replied not a word, but rang the bell furiously, when, after a very few seconds, a hasty step was heard on the stairs, and a middle-aged man, with great self-importance depicted on his countenance, rushed into the room, to whom Mr. Wiggins said, with great asperity—

"Mr. Scorum, I am surprised—greatly surprised, at your conduct. You know well how strongly I have insisted on this point; I must not and I will not be intruded on."

"Upon my word, sir, I was not aware of it," said Mr. Scorum, humbly.

"But you must be aware of it, Mr. Scorum. In a situation of such responsibility as yours, sir, you must consider yourself, and make yourself considered, of as much consequence as myself

in the shop—when I am not there. I beg, therefore, that you will take care I shall not be intruded on for the future; indeed you must, if you wish to preserve my countenance and patronage."

"Who is this—this—gent, then?" Scorum asked, with some hesitation.

"A young fellow applying to be taken on the establishment."

"Come, young man, walk down, will you!" Mr. Scorum said peremptorily to William; "but sir," turning to Mr. Wiggins, "who was it that dared to bring this young fellow up without my permission?"

"Simpson."

Simpson was immediately rung for, and on his appearing, Mr. Scorum demanded, in a very grand style—

"How dare you, Mr. Simpson, bring a young fellow up here without asking me?"

"I beg your pardon, really, Mr. Scorum; I do indeed," Simpson replied, full of trepidation: "I thought he was a gentleman."

"Thought!—you thought!" exclaimed Mr. Scorum with great indignation; "and how dare you to think, sir, contrary to the rules of this establishment? Go down, sir, this minute, and

remember your duty, for I shall keep my eye on you, sir. Mr. Wiggins must and will be obeyed—mark that."

"I am sorry, Mr. Wiggins, that I should cause any kind of misunderstanding in your house," William said, when Mr. Simpson had taken his very hasty leave; but he was stopped short by Mr. Wiggins exclaiming—

"Go down with my secretary immediately; I never meddle in these affairs. Leave the room, sir."

There was something in the tone of Mr. Wiggins's speech that half-determined William to leave the house without another word; but fancying that some kind of explanation was necessary where he had given offence, however unintentionally, he said quietly—

"Allow me, Mr. Wiggins, to say one word in explanation. I was totally unacquainted with the rules of your business, or I would not have transgressed them; and I fancy there must be some misconception on your part or on my own, or a man of your benevolent character would do me the justice to hear me."

Mr. Wiggins evidently felt this unintentional compliment, for his countenance gradually lost its stiffness while William spoke; and when he had finished, the gentleman said—

"Stay a minute, Mr. Scorum, and hear what the young man has to say, for I declare he has a good deal of good sense; and now I look at him again, I do think he has—eh!—rather a gentlemanly kind of address. Let me look at your certificates, young man."

"Certificates, sir!"

"Yes, to be sure; how many years have you served?"

"Served, sir; I don't understand you."

"What!—why, what do you mean? Who did you live with last? What branch did you profess? Are you a salesman, a commercial man, a dealer, a clerk, or what?"

"If you will give me leave, sir, I will inform you of my circumstances, from which you will understand best how I can serve you; for I protest I do not understand you."

"Not understand me!" cried Mr. Wiggins; "then what the—what do you want here?"

"Shall I send one of the young men for a policeman?" whispered Mr. Scorum in his patron's ear.

"Don't leave me, Mr. Scorum," whispered Mr. Wiggins in reply; "don't leave me, Scorum—that is, stay and be a witness; just ring for of the young men and send him."

This was done, when Mr. Wiggins arose, and said in a very majestic manner—

"Now, young fellow, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"My dear sir," he replied, "I believe that when you have heard my statement you will acquit me of an intention to violate any rules which you have formed for the government of your own house, and which you have, doubtless, a right to see obeyed. I am the son of a gentleman whom circumstances have reduced to extreme poverty, but without entailing on me personal disgrace. Your benevolent feelings, sir, have been brought under my notice, and when I saw that you were in want of assistants in your business, I thought my education, perhaps, might be made useful to you. This was the sole reason why I waited on you."

"Well, young gentleman," Mr. Wiggins replied mildly, "if that is all, there is no great harm done; only I lay it down as a rule, that no one shall intrude on me without first taking my pleasure whether I would be alone. As you say, Mr.—a—a—young gentleman, I have feelings—feelings of—I like to do good; and really—a—Mr. Scorum, just see whether the young gentleman would be of any use."

"I need not ask you," said Mr. Scorum, putting his hands under his coat tails, and exalting himself on tiptoe—"I need not ask you of course whether you can read and write, for every body can do that now——"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted William, "I am in extreme poverty, and must not be choice in the means of obtaining a livelihood, although I should prefer an occupation in which I could make some use of the education which my whole life has been engaged in acquiring."

"That is, you're a good accountant," asked Mr. Scorum.

"Why, I do not know," William replied; "I am acquainted of course with the common rules; but I have not had much practice in that way. But in the higher branches of arithmetic——"

"Vulgar fractions," whispered Mr. Scorum.

"In the higher branches of arithmetic and the mathematics, my tutor considered me qualified for examination for a scholarship."

"What is mathematics, Mr. Scorum," whispered Mr. Wiggins in his secretary's ear, "is it anything in our way?"

"I should think not," Mr. Scorum replied, also in a whisper.

"I have also gained prizes in Latin and

Greek," William continued, "and made some progress in the French and Italian languages; and this is all I can say to recommend myself to your employ."

Mr. Wiggins and Mr. Scorum looked very hard at each other for a moment, and then entered into a whispered conversation, the last words of which alone were audible, and they were spoken by Mr. Wiggins as follows:—

"Gentlemanly, decidedly; but, not quite enough show."

Mr. Scorum then said—

"A—Mr.—Mr."—

"Herbert," suggested William.

"Mr. Herbert, we are are in want—that is, we should have no objection to receive into our establishment a young man with a good address, and who could talk the languages those foreigners use. I don't see myself why all those people don't speak English like we, which is really a sensible kind of language, instead of their squeaking and squalling, which sounds like so much nonsense, and gives the young men a good deal of trouble. Now, do you think you can understand them, and answer them in their own way?"

"I believe, sir," William modestly replied, "I

can converse with an Italian or a Frenchman without great difficulty."

"That's what we want," said Mr. Scorum, glancing towards Mr. Wiggins with a smile. "But, Mr. Herbert, in a place like London you see—in fact, I dare say you can talk the foreign languages, and all that; but we must have proof before we can do anything in it. We must hear you, and judge for ourselves."

"Bien volontiers, Messieurs," replied William; "il me fera plaisir de converser avec vous. Par quel sujet commencerons nous?"

"Wee, Monseer," replied Mr. Scorum, who was equally skilled in French and Arabic, "I have no doubt, Mr. Wiggins, that Mr. Herbert is quite competent to that branch of the business."

"Well, then," said Mr. Wiggins to William, "leave a reference to some respectable person with Mr. Scorum, with your address, and I will send to you in two or three days."

William gave Mr. Scorum the address of the vicar of a parish on the estate in Gloucestershire, which formerly belonged to the family, and left the house.

CHAPTER III.

William Herbert had now some hope that he should do something for a livelihood; but hope, as Lord Bacon says, though a good breakfast, is a bad supper. William found it worse than this: all the breakfast and dinner he had eaten that day had been hope, and he felt very hungry after it, and was by no means inclined to sup on the same materials. In expectation of obtaining something better in a short time, he did now what he had been ashamed to do before—he took to a pawnbroker some of the very few articles in his possession which were not absolutely necessary to the maintaining of a decent appearance, on the proceeds of which he contrived to pass the time until the summons arrived from Mr. Wiggins.

In a few seconds after that summons arrived, he proceeded to the Wellington House, when Mr. Scorum led him up to the sanctum of Mr. Wiggins, and left him alone with that gentleman.

"Take a seat," said Mr. Wiggins; and William took one.

"Mr. Scorum," continued Mr. Wiggins—"Mr. Scorum has placed in my hands the letter from Mr. Conster, the person to whom you referred for character; and though I don't like church-parsons, I am happy to say it's quite satisfactory to the firm."

William bowed.

"Now, young gentleman," continued Mr. Wiggins, "you must be aware that it isn't every body would take a young man out of the streets into a concern like this here of mine; and you are aware—you must be aware—that you are very highly favoured. I expect, then, not only perfect honesty in every transaction over the counter—and let me tell you, I have transported five young gentlemen—but I expect that you will use your utmost endeavours for the good of the firm. You will put yourself under Mr. Scorum at once, who will at first employ you at the desk, by which you will learn our system: after which, with the greatest attention on your

part, I do not doubt that in time you will be able to make yourself useful behind the counter. You will board and lodge in the house at first, and will be very comfortable. But, Mr. Herbert, I must say one word of importance, which is, that with such a large number of young men under me, I consider myself highly accountable for their good conduct and morals, and therefore expect you to join us in family prayer, morning and evening—that is, in your turn, because a certain number of my assistants must be always in the shop; you, of course, will take your turn with the others; and I expect that on Sabbath-days you will attend the same place of worship as I do."

"I shall be very happy to do so," William readily replied; "for I am sure a gentleman of your way of thinking would not attend a place of worship where the doctrines of the gospel are not preached; and I am glad that my employment is under a gentleman of such commendable feelings."

"I assure you, Mr. Herbert," Mr. Wiggins replied, with great complacency, "it will be your own fault if you are not successful in life, which you must be, if you attend to Mr. Scorum's and my instructions."

At this point of the conversation, Mr. Scorum walked into the room, and said there was a foreigner in the shop who seemed not to know a word of English, which would be a good opportunity for testing the skill of Mr. Herbert. The young gentleman accordingly followed Mr. Scorum down stairs, and was introduced to the foreigner, amid some half-dozen grinning shopmen who were highly amused to hear a man talk such silly stuff, and full of expectation and wonder as to whether one of their young men could do it as well. But after several energetic speeches from the whiskered and moustachioed alien, and several attempts by William in French, Italian, Latin, and Greek, to make himself understood, he gave it up in despair, and confessed to Mr. Scorum that he could make nothing of the stranger's speech. The secretary again led the way to Mr. Wiggins's room, followed by William, and informed him of the unfortunate result; when he exclaimed with a frown—"What, Mr. Scorum!—can't the young man talk foreign languages? How is this, Mr. Herbert? Mr. Conster's letter tells me that you can, and I'd have you know as it's transportation to bring a false character."

"Very suspicious — very!" sagaciously remarked Mr. Scorum.

"But, gentlemen," said William, "I did not undertake to speak all foreign languages. The gentleman below belonged, I believe, to one of the northern nations; and I do not profess to understand anything of Polish or Russian."

"I don't know," Mr. Wiggins remarked, with a doubtful manner; "languages are languages. You profess to speak the foreign languages, and when a foreigner comes in you can't understand them. There seems something suspicious—eh, Mr. Scorum?"

"Very!" ejaculated the secretary.

"But, gentlemen," William said, as he felt that the whispering denoted some doubt of his capacity—"Gentlemen, I am willing to be tried in what I profess; and if you will introduce me to any native of France or Italy who is a person of education, I shall prove that I do not attempt to deceive you."

"Well—ah, there seems to be something in that,—eh, Mr. Scorum?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Wiggins, to be sure, I should think, perhaps, you see, there may be some difference between French and German,

so that if a German didn't know French, he wouldn't understand it any more than we."

"Ah, yes; I see," whispered Mr. Wiggins; then raising his voice, he said to William—

"Well, young gentleman, I am to understand that you undertake to transact business with the French and the Italians!"

"Yes, provided they are persons of education," William replied; "I will not profess more than I am able to perform; and as I have never been out of England, it is probable that I might not be familiar with the dialects of France and Italy; and though I might converse freely with a gentleman, it is possible I should not with a Norman peasant or a Neapolitan mechanic."

"Oh, Mr. Herbert," cried Mr. Scorum with great dignity, "that wont do here. You must talk to all alike with us. Ours is a counter trade, and not a family trade. You must talk to all alike, sir; we make no distinction in a ready-money trade."

"To be sure, Mr. Scorum," rejoined the Principal. "Put yourself under Mr. Scorum, Mr. Herbert, and we shall soon see what you are good for."

Persons who are but little acquainted with the details of trade may be surprised at the confi-

dence Mr. Wiggins placed in William Herbert, in taking him into his house on such slight recommendation. But the fact was, as William saw in a few seconds after sitting down at his desk, that it was nearly impossible for any one to be dishonest, in consequence of the very nice arrangement of the shop proceedings; for not only had every shopman a premium offered for the detection of a delinquent—so that the whole establishment was a set of spies one on the other—but the shopmen, instead of receiving money and putting it in a till, were compelled to make out a bill for every purchase, and carry the bill and money to a row of clerks who sat at the end of the shop, on an elevated bench, which gave them an uninterrupted view of everything passing in the busy scene below. The money was taken, and passed on to another clerk, who entered it in a ledger; the bill was filed, and a copy of it, made by a junior clerk, and receipted by Mr. Seaman, was handed to the shopman for the customer.

During every moment of the day this was going on, so that there was actually no time for dishonesty, to say nothing of its impossibility on other grounds. To commit any act of dishonesty without detection, all the clerks must have been in combination with the shopmen,

which was a thing very unlikely, since the clerks were of too high a rank to be seen mingled with the shopmen, and they knew very well that any junior who detected an elder in an act of peculation was entitled to his place. William Herbert was glad that such a system was carried on, since, though it implied a general suspicion, it was a preventive against individual suspicion or distrust.

William's duty at the desk was to copy the bills brought up by the shopmen, and hand them over to Mr. Scorum to be receipted. But the afternoon did not pass away without giving him another opportunity of testing his skill as a linguist. One of the shopmen whispered to Mr. Scorum that there was a Frenchman in the shop, and the chief secretary and William walked down to the floor to translate the Frenchman's language into the vernacular.

It happened this time that the foreigner was a Frenchman and a gentleman, and discerning that William also behaved in a manner somewhat above that of his supposed class, the gentleman was very glad to converse with him. But if he was glad, Mr. Scorum was more so: for it seemed to him astonishing how any people could make such a stupid noise as they made,

and yet understand each other as well as if they spoke good English. He could not help wishing to make Mr. Wiggins a witness of this strange phenomenon, and, with his very best bow, he accosted the Frenchman, and asked him to do him the extreme pleasure of walking into the drawing-room. Monsieur laid his hand on his heart in return for Mr. Scorum's smile, bowed in return for his bow, and made him a speech, in good French, unintelligible to Scorum, in return for his unintelligible English, when William repeated the invitation in the foreigner's language, and they walked up stairs.

Mr. Wiggins also was pleased with William's great skill in languages, by which he gave such evident pleasure to a stylish customer, who, perhaps, bought more on William's account than he would otherwise have done, and whose order must have been certainly lost, if he had not been understood.

When the stranger left, William, on very good terms with Mr. Wiggins, went again to his desk with Mr. Scorum, who immediately ordered 20,000 copies to be printed of the following notice, some of which were stuck up in the window before night:—

MESSRS. WIGGINS AND CO.

Beg to inform their friends from the Continent, and others, who do not understand the English language, that they will find no difficulty at their establishment,

WELLINGTON HOUSE,

980, OXFORD STREET,

since Messrs. W. & Co. have engaged first-rate persons to conduct their continental business.

Messrs. W. and Co. would suggest the favour of an early call at their establishment, as above, since they offer the

MOST EXTENSIVE STOCK IN EUROPE,

AT SUCH A

TREMENDOUS SACRIFICE,

As will make it worth the purchaser's notice.

N.B.—French, Mathematics, and Italian, are spoken by Messrs. W. and Co.

CHAPTER IV.

THIS afternoon was the first in William Herbert's life passed in direct labour for a livelihood under the eye of a task-master; yet it was not so disagreeable to him as might have been expected, since he was totally deficient of that gentlemanly sentiment of honour, which will make a poor man rather starve or swindle than work, and had acquired in its place an old-fashioned principle of practical honesty, which made him feel that it was sweeter to live by the labour of his head or hands, than on the bounty or the folly of any other part of mankind. It was pleasanter, to be sure, to pass day after day in the composition of a work which was to confer immortality as well as profit—two things which do not always run in couples—than to sit,

hour after hour, copying the detail of bits of silk, huckaback, and dimity, one of which he could not tell from the other; yet a feeling of security from want, and a sentiment of independence, invested the employment with that delight which is inseparable from a consciousness of performing a duty.

The first day's work at the desk was a short one, since he had been engaged at about three in the afternoon, and at six was ordered down to the kitchen to take tea, with an assurance that his services would not be required again that night. A narrow staircase, which grew gradually darker as he descended, led him into a place totally dark, where his nostrils were regaled with a great variety of scents, the best of which argued at least a great want of drainage and water; though the fact was, that all the hot liquor, and other filth of the house, were sent from this dark spot, in its course to that reservoir of nastiness—the Thames. William had no difficulty in finding his way through the darkness of this back kitchen, since the door of the front kitchen always stood open, to let a little muddy light into that gloomy place. The front kitchen, however, was not improved by this participation of the blessing of light which dis-

tinguished it, since the open door permitted the back kitchen to return the obligation, by pouring in a pretty considerable quantity of the perfume with which it abounded. The state of the windows shewed that there was little chance of purification in that quarter, since the window itself was some six feet below the level of the pavement, and guarded by a very heavy grating, over which persons passed and re-passed every minute of the day, sending down at every step dust or mud—the window evidently was made only to let in a little sullen light which the sun would have been ashamed to own. In this kitchen, not over lofty, not over large, and the reverse of over sweet, sat Mrs. Wiggins, whose humble birth was proclaimed by the extra splendour of her garments, which could not throw a charm over a face and form which nature, for some wise purpose, had declined to make dangerous to the hearts of man. Mrs. Wiggins was thin and dark, and looked peevish, suspicious, and bitter; but she was considered very pious. This lady presided at the tea-table, which, as for all the meals, was set out at first with the necessaries for the whole establishment, who came down in batches as they could be spared; and Mrs. Wiggins sat at the head the whole time, for no other

purpose, of course, than to help the young men to what they liked best, and, perhaps, to remind them when the quarter of an hour had elapsed, which was the time allowed to each person at meals. William had a very good cup or two of tea, and felt very much the better for it, which was not to be wondered at, considering how long he had been at starvation point; but one thing struck him as rather curious, which was, that several young men came down to tea as he was about to finish, when Mrs. Wiggins filled the pot afresh with water, and continued to fill the cups for the new comers, utterly forgetful that she had not put in also a second lot of tea. William's humanity towards the young men was such, that he was on the point of informing her of her forgetfulness, when she prevented it, by informing him, with a voice much less sweet than that of an angel, that he had been down stairs five minutes longer than was allowed, when he returned to the shop. There he was instructed to assist the young men in rolling up the thousands of things with which they had tempted their fair customers throughout the day. The business of this establishment did not last beyond six in the evening, when fashionable masters and mistresses go home to put on their

eating clothes; in consequence of which the young gentlemen of Wellington House were particularly favoured above their contemporaries, since they generally got the folding up finished by a very little after twelve, allowing a proportion to be at family prayer. William, of course, on this first evening of his being in the house, was invited to attend prayers; and, indeed, from the manner of the invitation, he formed as favourable an opinion of all the subordinate members of the establishment as of the superiors; since not only was he himself invited very cordially, but every shopman seemed exceedingly anxious to persuade his fellows to avail themselves of the opportunity—nay, urged the persuasion with such a degree of earnestness, that if William had not been aware of the impossibility of such a thing, he might have supposed that the shopmen actually preferred the rolling-up of pieces of linen and cotton to the delights of family-worship.

It was a trifle after eleven when William went down to supper, for which pleasant employment, as for tea, a quarter of an hour was allowed. When this ceremony had been performed, he followed about a dozen of young men up to a room on the second floor, which

was devoted to meetings between Mr. Wiggins and the youths under his care. Mr. Wiggins had some ledgers open before him, in which he appeared to be making calculations; for, merely glancing round at the young men, he continued to pore over the books for a considerable time, without inviting them to take seats, though, indeed, such an invitation must have been unaccepted, inasmuch as the room contained very many fewer chairs than persons. The young men waited as patiently as possible in the humble posture of slaves, during about a quarter of an hour, when Mr. Wiggins closed his ledgers, and opened a Bible, from which he read a chapter on the duties of servants, which was a chapter of frequent occurrence in that assembly, after which he delivered an extempore prayer, the style of which appeared to William very different from, and not a great improvement on, that of the Liturgy: but it left no disagreeable impression on his mind, for he said to himself, "If a man gives five pounds a year to the poor, I shall not quarrel with him on account of the form of his prayers."

When this nightly ceremony was over, the young men left the room, one of them carrying a flat candlestick, with which he led the way

up four other flights of stairs, until they arrived at the floor immediately under the roof, when four young gentlemen, preceded by the candle-bearer, went into a room about six feet square, and requested William to follow. He found that this little room contained two little beds, set side by side, and was filled by them and a little washing-stand in a corner, from which he concluded, that he was now to enjoy a luxury of which he had sometimes heard, but which he had never experienced—the luxury of sleeping three in a bed. No sooner had they all entered, than all hands were busy in unfastening braces, straps, and pins, with the exception of William; for as he had never yet prepared for bed in the presence of another person, he was very much disinclined to begin in the presence of five strangers. But Mr. Simpson, who happened to be one of the party, noticing it, said, "I say, Mr. Herbert, why don't you peel, eh? I'll be hanged if you'll know where to find your toggery in the morning, if you ain't quick, for old Scorum only allows us five minutes before he comes for the candle."

This was no more than the truth; for before William had made any great progress in undressing, Mr. Scorum knocked at the door, and

William, the only person out of bed, gave him the candle.

The reader will, as a matter of course, believe that the evident superiority of William Herbert to his companions, both in education and manners, as well as in occupation, procured for him their cordial hatred; but such was not the fact. These young persons hardly looked on him as a gentleman, since he made no pretensions to superiority, as they would have done in his situation; his behaviour was more remarkable for humility and quietness than for arrogance and bluster, which they had always considered to distinguish the gentleman. Besides, though the part which he was to perform in the firm must be considered rather superior to theirs, yet it was not to affect them in any way; he was not to be their superior in their own department; and the thought that they were able to instruct a young gentleman who had learned Latin and Greek at the universities, caused them to consider him as in some measure under their protection, which, of all feelings, is the one most likely to lead to esteem.

Accordingly, as soon as Mr. Scorum was heard descending to the lower apartments, Mr. [illegible]pson began to talk to his companions, as

familiarly as though no stranger were present: "I say, Mr. Wizzle, did you see that there young female in purple poplin, red beads, and green silk bonnet with French-white lining, at the grodynap counter?"

"I think I did," Mr. Wizzle replied, from the next bed.

"An uncommon fine girl—the Honourable Miss Thingamy—I forget her name. Oh, what eyes!—and you should have seen the look she gave me! I do think that she—I'll bet anybody sixpence that she'll come again to-morrow."

"There was a very handsome young lady at my counter, quite top-up, as looked very hard at me," said another young gentleman.

"So there was at mine," another replied.

"And at mine too," said a third.

"There's nothing very curous about that there," said the fourth and last, who had not yet spoken; "there's not a day as passes but what I gets a wicked look from some first-rate or other."

"Oh, Higgins," replied Simpson, in a tone of gentle reproach—"Higgins, my dear fellow, there's no better fellow than you in all the West End; but why don't you pay more attention to your language, as I have so many times told you?"

"Why, so long as you understands what I says, what signifies?" Higgins replied, rather gruffly.

"Oh, Higgins!—you know people tells what you are, by our language. People can always tell if you have been brought up well, by hearing you talk; and, really, to hear your ungrammatical words and mispronounciation, people wouldn't suppose you the respectable young man as you are—would they, Mr. Nobbles?"

"I don't see but what my talking is as good as yourn," said Higgins, "and I gets as good wages."

"Now, don't be offended, Higgins, my dear fellow," said Mr. Simpson, very blandly; "what I say is for your own good, and I know it's not your fault as you don't talk so fashionable as us. The fact is this here:—you've been a-spending all your days in the city, and got hold of their incorrect talking; but I'm sure you'll rub it off, if you'll only listen to us, and I shall be very happy to correct you as often as you make a faux-pass. You see, Mr. Herbert, we know a little Greek here, without going to the university. But, gents, about this here gal, the Honourable Miss—Miss What's-her-name!—I'll

be hanged if I know what to make of it! She wouldn't have looked as she did for nothing—and, my eye, such a fortune! Who knows, Mr. Nobbles, whether a young fellow may not have a chance! Some of these great folks don't care about fortune, and sometimes run away with their footmen, which I should think isn't to be put in comparison with us. I only wish our concern was like *Poddles and Co.'s*, where they have a show-room up stairs, that a young gentleman can ask a young woman up to, and work your way without anybody peeping at you! But we can't do nothing of that sort here—eh, Nobbles? I had a good mind to give her hand a bit of a squeeze, to see how she would bear it; but I recollected how Papson got took in by squeezing a lady's hand that he thought looked wicked at him, when she gave him a smack on the side of the head, that sent him a-spinning like a top, and got him turned away. I'll be hanged if there's any fellows so bad off as we be—is there, Toppers? for there's no young gentlemen that ladies look so sweet on. But what can we do? If we was to offer to make love downright to any great lady, she'd expect to be invited at once to a trip to Greenwich, or Barnet, or

Richmond, and you couldn't make love without. But how are we to get out, except on Sundays? And then the expense!—you could not take any first-rate lady to anywheres but a first-rate inn; and when you reckon up horse and gig, and hay, and dinner, and cakes, and ginger-beer, and turnpikes, and oranges, and ale—why, it 'nd cost ten or twelve shillings, or more, and that's a week's wages, and if you spend that in a trip, I should like to know how you are to find yourself in clothes, and washing, and mending?"

"Having uttered this puzzling query, Mr. Simpson paused for an answer, and to take breath, when his ears were accosted by certain musical sounds peculiar to a state of bodily repose, which his own earnestness had prevented him from noticing before, although they were deep and loud on both sides of him. He had not uttered all that was in his mind on the subject he had been discussing, and, willing to secure at least one listener, he called, gently—"Nobbles! Wizzle! Toppers! Higgins! Herbert!" when, finding them all insensible to his appeal, he sighed, drew the bed-clothes over his head, and in a few seconds was taking a prominent part in the nasal concert.

CHAPTER V.

William Herbert's joy in obtaining employment was very great, but not of such a turbulent nature as to keep him awake through the night—in fact, he passed the night in one unbroken nap, and might have spent some part of the day in the same manner, but that, between five and six in the morning, he dreamed that he was just going to Roseley church as rector, on a bright sabbath morning when every beautiful thing on the face of the earth looks more beautiful than common, as though every thing partook of that holy quiet, and satisfaction, and love, which glorified the first sabbath. The hum of the world was stilled, the very beasts looked up with an expression of repose, the air that floated around was vocal only with the

sounds of nature; the shaking of a bough, or the chirrup of a bird, save when the pleasant chime of the church-going bells poured their heavenly sounds along the vale. Those sweet bells!—it was the dearest music that had ever reached his ears, and he walked on faster and faster that it might fill ear and heart to the exclusion of every less pleasant sound, when just as he reached the church door he awoke, and found that a little bell, hanging about six inches above his head, was ringing away incessantly and furiously, and that his five companions were sitting up in bed, rubbing their eyes, stretching their arms, and yawning.

The sun had not much outstripped these young gentlemen in early rising; for while his carriage-wheels were yet lingering on the horizon, they had donned their morning habiliments, and were ready to exhibit their beauty to the world. William also arose, as he was requested to do, although unsatisfied with a night's rest, which indeed was much shorter than he had been lately accustomed to; but being glad to sacrifice trifles to gain essentials, he proceeded to dress himself with all possible speed. In doing this, he observed what he had not observed on the previous night—the striking

difference between the fitting up of their room and of the rooms below. This bedroom for six was just large enough to hold two beds, each about six feet in length and four in width. These beds, placed side by side, touched the wall on three sides of the room, and left about a foot vacant on the side where the door was, which, as it opened, fell back against the bed, leaving just room for a thin man to squeeze himself in—a matter to be taken into calculation here, for certainly not one man on the establishment was overburdened with obesity. The bedsteads, which were of the commonest kind, called tent, were without furniture, and the linen was of the coarsest quality, and not exactly of the colour to please a very delicate man. The walls of the room seemed never to have been coloured or plastered, but bore the chilling appearance of half-dried mortar; the floor was without carpet, the room had no room for a chair, and the deal corner washing-stand, with its cracked jug of fathomless water, and dirty basin, seemed not very tempting, although surmounted by a sixpenny looking-glass. Before William had completed his outer man, his five companions were leaving the room, when he said to Simpson, the only person with whom he

had yet formed any kind of acquaintance, "I wish you would shew me, Mr. Simpson, where I can wash myself."

"Wash!" cried Simpson, laughing, as did the other young men, "why you can't wash in the morning! We must get down and put the shop to rights, and set out the windows, and then we come up and dress for the day."

"But I cannot go down without washing," said William.

"Oh, but you must!" replied Simpson; "just dip the end of your towel in the jug, and rub it over your face to freshen you up a bit, and wash after breakfast."

"But I do not see a towel."

"A towel!—why haven't you brought one! We find our own towels and soap—the establishment wont provide them things. I'd lend you mine, only I have just locked it up in my box, and can't stay. So just come down, and send one of the boys out for a bit of soap, and buy a towel down stairs, and you'll be all right."

"But I have no money."

"No money!—what, not enough to buy a bit of soap! Well, then, ask Scorum to advance a

trifle; but come along, or we shall get it, I can tell you."

When the shop had been thoroughly cleaned, the window set out in its diurnal brilliance, and the breakfast eaten, William requested Mr. Scorum to advance him a little money to be deducted from his salary, but Mr. Scorum shook his head and said it was against the rules of the concern to advance any part of the wages beforehand; and William feared that the blessing of a morning ablution would be impossible to him for an indefinite period: but meeting Simpson shortly after he had spoken to Scorum, and telling him of his ill-luck, that young gentleman generously advanced him a shilling on his note of hand, at fifty per cent. interest, to be paid from the first receipt of salary, and William procured the luxury so much desired.

Such of my readers as have acquired their ideas of gentlemanly behaviour from the imaginative descriptions of novelists, may suppose that William Herbert had very little of the gentleman in his composition, since, instead of bidding Mr. Scorum and his companions go to the devil, and leaving the house with lofty in-

dignation, in consequence of the impertinence of some, and the familiarity of others, with a person of his rank, he took everything as coolly and composedly as though he had been from childhood accustomed to domestic details similar to those of the Wellington House. The fact is, that the petty economy which he observed in the rules of the establishment, and the sordid caution which every member seemed to pride himself on, to the destruction of everything like liberality or generosity, were exceedingly disagreeable to him, and it was not without a struggle that he determined to remain in the house. At home, in his father's time, he had had the command of a liberal table, he had occupied an elegant suite of apartments, and had not known the want of money; and, although the reverse of extravagant in his personal expenditure, he would have freely imparted what he had to any one—he had never been taught the duty of saving money, or that there was any intrinsic value in it. This also had been the case at the university. His rooms were his own, and his purse, which was very well supplied, he would not have closed to the request of any person whom he knew; and even in the worst of his

distress in London, when he was compelled to reduce his expenditure to the lowest possible scale, he had always been able to call his bedroom his own, and had not been compelled to endeavour to borrow money and been refused. He thought very well of Mr. Wiggins, as a man of strict religious principles and of benevolence; but for some time he could not imagine what reason Mr. Scorum could have for refusing to lend him a shilling, and lamented that a master could not be served by persons of his own kind; but he did not leave the house on this account—he thought of the little chance he had of procuring other employment—he thought of his mother—and besides, he considered his own repugnance to the manners of the house a feeling that ought to be corrected, and that it was his duty to stay and acquire the charity that can look calmly at those things which most shock our most inveterate prejudices. He knew how different were the nature and habits of man in different nations, and asked himself why the same difference should not exist in the same nation; and he could not at once make up his mind on the point as to whether there were not as much reason in the money-saving principles which guided all the people around

him, as in that careless expenditure of money to which he had been habituated from youth. He felt it to be his duty to obliterate from his mind every emotion of disgust towards any habit of his fellow men which was not sinful.

Nothing worthy of remark occurred in the remainder of the day when William was at so much trouble to procure the means of ablution; but on the following morning, which was Sunday, the whole establishment was mustered in the kitchen at seven o'clock, when, after a short prayer and address from Mr. Wiggins, the young men proceeded to Bethesda chapel, which was situated in a narrow lane leading out of Tottenham Court Road, and was by no means remarkable for exterior or interior grace, or respectability of neighbourhood. The chair was taken by a solemn-looking personage, who, after giving out a hymn to which Mr. Scorum fitted a tune, called Mr. Wiggins by name, who then delivered an extempore prayer of very considerable length, in which William had the felicity of hearing himself very plainly alluded to. When he had done, another hymn was sung, and another gentleman called on until about two hours had elapsed, when the chairman dismissed the company. Here again Wil-

liam's prejudices were shocked—he was doubtful whether to be amused with the vulgar colloquiums of the speakers, or to be disgusted with their familiarity with the Deity whom he worshipped with awe and reverence—the impressions made on him at this meeting were anything but religious, but still he said to himself —what displeases me is merely the ignorance or bad taste of these persons; I must wait and see if they are good men, and if they are, it matters but little whether they are grammarians or not. When breakfast was over, the party again set out for Bethesda chapel, when the Reverend Mr. Jabber delivered a sermon very remarkable for positive assertion and violent declamation, though not for knowledge of the human faculties, or for persuasions to virtue, which was utterly disgusting to William Herbert, who, though he admired every species of eloquence, yet believed that no man was qualified to become a teacher of mankind, until he had made himself acquainted with the history of man, and with the springs of his actions and sentiments. It was, therefore, with pleasure that he received from Simpson, as they returned to dinner, the information that the remainder of the day, until nine in the evening, was at

their own disposal; and when Simpson invited him to make one in a party for a walk, he gladly consented.

Accordingly, no sooner had Mr. Wiggins said grace, after dinner, than Simpson and four other young gentlemen, besides William, left the house together. It was a dull day, but William felt it not; the undisturbed and unsullied breath of heaven played with a sabbath purity over his face, and contrasting as it did with the close and unhealthy atmosphere of the Wellington House, it made him glad. It was not the pure air of the country, enriched with the stolen perfume of beds of violets, and lilies, and primroses; but even in the murkiest part of the huge city, the breath of Sunday is the sweetest of the whole week; and even if it had not been so, the chances of the open air were better than the pollution of small rooms over-peopled—besides, although confinement and labour had not been unpleasing to him, while he considered what want it had relieved him from, it was doubtless very sweet to feel that he was once more at liberty.

To those of my readers who are acquainted with the habits of young gentlemen like William Herbert's companions, it will be hardly

necessary to state that they bent their way down Oxford-street, and turned into Hyde Park, at the Tyburn gate, to obtain a glimpse of the Corinthian order of society from the only accessible point of view. The parks had always been William's favourite walks in the neighbourhood of London, as the only places within his reach that bore any resemblance to the country; but on this afternoon the pleasure was less than usual; for after being amused during a few seconds by the novelty of his companions' remarks and discussions on horses, horsemanship, beauty, and fashion, he grew weary of a conversation which might be carried on with the exertion of a very small portion of understanding, and felt that he might have spent the day in a much more pleasant and profitable manner. His virtue was, however, not of that squeamish kind which, rather than stretch a point in form, would sacrifice the essentials of charity and politeness. As he had agreed to come out with his present companions—almost the only persons from whom he had received a civility since he had been in London—he did not run away from them because they were not exactly after his taste; but suppressing every outward expression of dislike,

made himself as agreeable as possible, with a determination in his own mind to spend his next leisure hours in a very different manner.

But even the pleasure of walking for three or four hours in a hot day, amid clouds of dust from aristocratic hoofs and wheels, does not always prevent the consciousness of fatigue and thirst; and the young gentlemen, though very fond of this employment of their leisure hours, began to feel somewhat tired as they turned back the third time from the Kensington gate, and found the throng of privileged sabbath-breakers rapidly thinning, and silence and dullness gathering over the busy scene of idleness.

"Well, where are you for?" inquired Mr. Nobbles of his companions, as they entered Piccadilly at Hyde Park Gate; "there's a famous smithy as I was at last Sunday—splendid porter!"

The young gentlemen agreed to accompany him, when he conducted them to a small public-house, in a narrow and obscure lane, between the Strand and the Thames, and parallel to both, which bore somewhat of the comfortable, though humble, appearance of a village alehouse. Indeed, it is only in the dullest and darkest nooks that any relics of our forefathers' jollity subsist at the present time in the metropolis,

since the march of improvement has thrust them from all the principal streets, and substituted the splendour and discomfort of gin-palaces, and the unsociality and exorbitance of hotels. William had no objection whatever to enter this alehouse, although it was Sunday, for the best of all reasons—namely, he was thirsty, and knew that it was not the custom of a Christian country to get anything to drink without paying for it. Mr. Nobbles led his companions into a room, which seemed the only one in the house set apart for drinking, and which was a kind of second-rate tap-room. There were about a dozen persons in the room when they entered, four or five of whom, judging by the shabbiness of their coats and shoes, and their unshaven and unwashed faces, were journeymen tailors and shoemakers, and the rest appeared to be ostlers, boatmen, and coal-heavers. William cared very little about the rank of the company, since he had entered the house to drink and not to converse; but he was somewhat surprised to see that, although he had quenched his thirst and was ready to depart, his companions filled their pipes, and appeared to have settled themselves in what they considered comfortable quarters, which they did

not mean to leave very shortly. William sat for a short time, earnestly endeavouring to make an excuse for leaving the house without giving offence to his friends, when a conversation established itself between them and the other company, in which it appeared that his party were unconscious of a fact which was very plain to him, that they were a butt for the not very refined wit of the others. After a good deal of sparring, in which the drapers seemed quite insensible of the irony of their opponents, one of the gentlemen, a man of gigantic proportions, dressed in a white frock, crimson plush breeches, white cotton stockings, and lace up boots, said to one of his companions—

"I say, Bill; I'm blow'd if I shan't take to pipes again, now I sees they're a comin' in fashion agin. I'm bless'd if I've smoked anything but Hawanners, the devil knows how long."

"Why, really," remarked Mr. Simpson, withdrawing his pipe a moment, "I very much prefer a pipe myself—'tis more sweeter."

"I say, Old Swipes, bring me a pipe," Mr. Coalheaver cried; "you may as vell be out of the vorld as out of the fashion. As you says, sir, a yard of clay is more sweeter than a Hawanner stuck under your nose. But I say, Bill, I'm

blow'd if it 'ud do to smoke a pipe if you was a going a travelling fur."

"Why not, sir?" inquired Mr. Nobbles, innocently.

"Because," replied Mr. Coalheaver, "you see, Mister, it's always a sign of rain when you see a pig a-carrying of straws in his mouth."

"Oh, you be dem'd," rejoined Mr. Nobbles, scornfully, amid the loud laughter of the strangers.

William was not amused—he was not pleased. Having requested Mr. Simpson to excuse him, he left the house, and made all speed down Parliament-street, towards Westminster Abbey, which he reached in time to hear the greater part of the evening service. When the service was over, he went into St. Margaret's, where service was just commencing; and having stayed through the greater part of it, contrived to reach home within a few seconds of nine, where, after supper, all the youths assembled at family worship, which differed but little from that of other days, save that it was somewhat longer, and was embellished by an energetic address from the Rev. Mr. Jabber, which William admired just as much as he did his sermons.

Such was the manner in which William Her-

bert spent his first Sunday after he became a linen-draper's assistant; and he was not pleased with it, but made up his mind to a very different employment of it in future. He was not so just—that is, so uncharitable—as to blame his companions, to whom a long course of confinement through the week, as well as the whole of their education, had made a Sunday's relaxation not only excusable, but almost unavoidable; but, conscious himself of possessing at least the elements of a good education, and cherishing continually the broken fragments of the hopes which had been so beautiful in their perfectness, he determined that his leisure moments, whether on Sunday or on any other day, should in future be devoted to the carrying on of what had been so happily begun.

But while he was thus determining, his companions, as they prepared for bed, were discussing the adventures of the day; and when one of them mentioned, with some degree of confidence, what he should do six months after, William said—

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Simpson; but I wish you would explain one thing that has a good deal puzzled me. You speak confidently of remaining here six months, while the house

is covered with bills stating that our employers are selling off. I do not comprehend it."

At this remark all the young gentlemen united in a quiet laugh, and Mr. Simpson said—

"Why, you don't suppose as they're a going to shut up a concern like this here, do you?"

"I certainly feared that such was the case," William replied.

"Well," said Simpson, "I didn't think any young man in the world was so little down to the move, as that there. Why, we only put up the 'selling-off' go, to make people believe as they'll buy bargains."

"Indeed!" said William, in amazement; "and do you consider that honest?"

"To be sure, I do. Why, there's hundreds of houses that does it. But who's to shut an establishment up like this here?"

"Why, the master, Mr. Wiggins, I should suppose."

"Stuff!—that's all gammon. Why, Wiggins could no more close the concern than Scorum could. Why he and Scorum are only put in by other parties to sell off what they send in. Perhaps Wiggins is a partner, too, and Scorum isn't—but that's all the difference; and Scorum is as much a spy over Wiggins as Wiggins is

over him; and though Wiggins is master, he can't turn Scorum out. Don't you see the dodge?"

"I don't exactly understand," William replied.

"Well, then, look here. Wiggins is a very pious man, and he knows a precious lot of pious men and parsons, in town and country, too; in fact, the parsons know one another, all through the country. Now this here first-rate concern belongs to a lot of these here pious men; and a precious lot of them there is. Well, they puts in so much a-piece, and starts it, and puts in Wiggins as manager; but puts in Scorum, too, to see all fair play; and they've got him in such a way that he and Wiggins can never put their heads together to do the rest of the firm. Now, you see, as these here pious people knows each other throughout the country, whenever one of 'em is down in his luck, and wants to make a move to America, or somewhere, all he's got to do is to tell his parson he wants to sell his stock, and he writes up to town, and one of the firm goes down, and if it's a stock that'll sell, he gives a sum quietly for the lot, and sends it up at once—and the pious man cuts off. And besides that, he deals sometimes

with nobs, as witness the drawing-room. I'll be hang'd, if the house ha'nt been furnished throughout three or four times, the last two years, in the way of trade. There's no end to the business we've done of that kind, and 'tis a business that pays, let me tell you."

"But," asked William, "how does the creditor get his money?"

"Oh, he's done, of course."

"Well," said William, with some hesitation, "I don't exactly understand this—there seems to be something very dishonest in it; but I should think business of that kind must be extremely dangerous, since it holds out a temptation to the dishonest debtor to stretch his credit to the utmost, when, on the eve of bankruptcy or absconding, he knows he can sell his stock secretly for ready money."

"Oh! I dare say that game is kept up pretty well," Simpson replied, with a laugh.

"Not with Mr. Wiggins's knowledge, surely?" replied William; "for transactions of this kind cannot be called honest."

"Honest! honest!" repeated Mr. Simpson, doubtingly, as though he were beating his brains to make out the possible meaning of a Greek word which he had just heard for the

first time. "Honest!—well, now, I don't know about that; we don't learn about that kind of thing, you know, when we are serving our time; but I can tell you, all the best houses do a good deal in that way."

"But you don't suppose that Mr. Wiggins would engage in such business?"

"Why, I should think 'tis the very thing to suit him."

"What! do you suppose that Mr. Wiggins is not honest?"

"Oh, no; I mean to say as Mr. Wiggins is a highly respectable man—very. He has knocked up for himself three times—that is, compounded with his creditors twice—and passed through the court once, and made lots of money. Nobody knows what he's worth. You see, being such a religious man, he got capital credit, and when he was in pretty deep, he smashed. But the worst of that trick is, it wont last. The trade get down to it, and wont stand tick any more; so that he embarks in this here concern with other parties, and does a profitable business besides, in discounting bills in the connexion that he belongs to."

"I can't believe," William replied, "that a

man of Mr. Wiggins's strict principles could be guilty of what you say."

"Guilty!—that be hanged," cried Simpson; "everybody does it; and I'll be hanged if it isn't a good move. But I say, we must get into bed, or we shan't be up by five."

CHAPTER VI.

During the ensuing month, William Herbert had little opportunity of ascertaining from his own personal experience the truth or falsehood of the account given by Mr. Simpson, in the last chapter, of the business carried on by the firm of the Wellington House. Many other curious remarks and statements were made in that time by Simpson and his companions, which at times created unpleasant suspicions or doubts in William's mind; but he was determined not to judge the firm without indisputable facts from which to form a correct judgment, and continued to mind his own business and do his duty to his employers, keeping his eyes open for anything that might occur.

This month, indeed, passed away without any alteration of circumstances, or incident worthy of notice in this history, his time being almost wholly occupied at the desk; since it would be as amusing to read the adventures of a steam-engine, a coffee-mill, or a water-wheel, or any other piece of machinery, as that of a man who sits from morning till night, copying what another man has written.

But as William Herbert's appearance and manners were decidedly those of a gentleman, he had not been at the Wellington House more than a month, when it became a great object with Mr. Scorum to get the young man behind the counter, where his accomplishments and untiring industry might be of more essential service to the firm, than the most dexterous exercise of his fingers at the desk. But the elegant art of counter-oratory is not to be acquired all at once. It is the one object, the grand pursuit and all-absorbing occupation—nay, the very life of life to so many thousands of our fellow-men, that it is not to be wondered at, if it must be acquired only by slow degrees where nature has not originally given the power; and that when nature has endowed an individual with faculties that may be turned into that channel, it is rewarded

by substantial benefits, like any other manifestations of genius. As William had been rejoiced to procure a shelter for his head, so he had been solicitous to secure it, if possible, and with that intent, he laboured incessantly to acquire a perfect knowledge of the business, which was all he had to depend on, and which perhaps was the only way by which he could ever earn a livelihood. He thought as earnestly, and stored his mind as carefully, as though he had been engaged in some abstruse branches of natural philosophy, and as the business of a draper is not quite so difficult as that of Sir Isaac Newton, he was not long in gaining a considerable quantity of knowledge. The familiar use of their private marks, and a general idea of the relative value of articles, he had insensibly gained while at the desk; he had afterwards learned to distinguish pretty accurately betwixt the different classes of goods, by assisting the young men to roll up in the evening, and asking a few questions: but, indeed, he did not find much difficulty in this, since he had a good ground to start on, for, being a young man of much reflection, from observation of the sheets and blankets of his bed, he had acquired, even before he entered Wellington

House, a perfect knowledge of the difference between linen and flannel.

The first thing William was desired to do, in order to qualify him for recommending articles behind the counter, was to carry parcels of goods to the houses of such customers as wished to examine them at home. This was to be done, not as a porter conveying a packet made up to order, but as a person of judgment, whose opinion was to be taken in selecting the goods; and as the most considerable part of his duty was to push off as many of his employer's goods as possible, his office was, of course, a confidential one. But as a set-off against the pleasure arising from the consciousness of filling a situation of trust and importance, some circumstances must be mentioned, which at first caused him considerable annoyance. William, although he had been knocked about a good deal by the world, and seemed now about as insignificant a person as could be, still retained some of the feelings inseparable from an education in the higher ranks of life. He expected the gentlemen and ladies on whom he called, to behave to him as ladies and gentlemen do to each other, although it was to a linendraper; and when he was flatly contradicted, and given

to understand that he was a fool, or a liar, or many degrees below notice, he felt somewhat irritated. For this, Mr. Scorum, his tutor, was to be blamed, since, although he had inculcated unbounded humility, politeness, and long-suffering, yet, for want of the power of abstraction, he had not laid down in express terms the principle so universally acted on in the world—viz., that to be a good tradesman, a man must be void of feeling, principle, and honour.

The first visit William Herbert paid in his new capacity, was to the house of Lady Gander, in the neighbourhood of Portland-square. It was a large, handsome house, of which the most prominent part was the enormous door with its colossal rapper, up to which William, of course, directly advanced, and gave a modest rap. No person replied to the summons, and he rapped again, a little louder, but with the same result. At length, as he was about to return home to inform Mr. Scorum that the family was out, he saw a label under the rapper, on which the directions were, "Rap and ring." He obeyed this command, and the bell-handle had scarcely sprung from his hand, when the door started wide open, and a very tall gentleman with large calves, white head, and a shoulder decorated

with the tagged ends of yellow stay-laces, stood before him, and vivified the whole street with the splendid colours of his uniform. This brilliant apparition, however, continued but a moment; for before William could say a word, the magnificent spectacle looked black as thunder, and slammed the door in his face, with a report that alarmed all the echoes in Portland-square. William could not comprehend why a door should be shut in his face before he had communicated his business; for he could not understand how he had offended. It was evidently useless to knock again, since he was not allowed to speak, and he therefore turned homewards; but before he reached the extremity of the building, he remarked a little iron gate in the railings, leading down to a range of underground windows, where he saw some ladies and gentlemen, who looked more good-humoured and less ostentatious than the great personage he had seen above, and he went down to see whether he could ascertain why he had been so summarily dismissed. He found no difficulty in gaining admission at the kitchen door, but learned that he had committed a very grand mistake in calling at the front door, where only persons of rank were attended to. William requested to

see Lady Gander; but, as a matter of course, the request was in vain, after he had said that he had come to shew her ladyship some "muslins, crapes, and ginghams," for half a dozen fair (I mean female) hands pounced at once upon the bundle, and disclosed its contents to the admiring eyes of scullery-maids, cooks, and errand-boys, who all gave their opinions on each article, before William was allowed to leave the kitchen. But even then, they made but little progress towards her ladyship; for as William followed the footman to her ladyship, they met on the stairs the smart lady's-maid, who immediately conducted William and his bundle to the housekeeper's room, where she examined piece by piece with her own dress, and judged of their suitableness to her complexion by her appearance in the large looking-glass fastened over the fireplace. William grew somewhat impatient of these varied experiments, and suggested once or twice that he might be wanted at home, to which the lady's-maid deigned to reply by a glance of lofty and distant contempt; nay, when she had thoroughly examined the tints and texture of every piece in the packet, she left the room for a few minutes, ordering him to wait; and when she returned, brought with her

an elderly lady, who, he understood, was the housekeeper. The venerable lady also tested the effect of these gorgeous tints of the east by the side of her yellow wrinkled countenance, and smiled approvingly on the finery. At length, when the novelty of the articles had in some measure subsided, William's request to see Lady Gander was attended to, by the lady's-maid ordering him to ring the bell; but when the footman entered, William had the satisfaction to find that her ladyship had been gone out in her carriage about five minutes, and would not be back until she came to dress for dinner, when, of course, she could not be seen.

When William Herbert reached the Wellington House, after this first and unsuccessful expedition in the trading way, Mr. Scorum, though he looked very blank and not very well pleased, did not make any audible remark on his want of success. But William and his sleeping companions were hardly safe in their room, when Simpson asked with great eagerness—"I say, Herbert, didn't you bring back all the pieces you took to Lady Gander's to-day?"

William replied in the affirmative.

"Oh, my eyes! I thought so, from Scoum's phiz," Simpson replied. "Well, my fine

fellow, I wouldn't be in your shoes, and no mistake."

"Why, what is the matter?"

"The matter, eh! eh!—Higgins, here's Herbert a been out to Lady Gander's and sold nothing!"

"It was not my fault."

"Ha, ha!—what do you think we are kept for?—not to visit ladies and gentlemen, and walk about town without selling nothing. You must sell summut, my fine fellow, and no mistake, or it's all up with you."

"But how am I to sell if I cannot see the customer?"

"Oh, that wont do, I can tell you—will it, Nobbles? You must sell—you must do business—eh, Higgins? Why, there's been a matter of twenty sacked in the last twelvemonth for the same thing, and letting a customer go out of the shop without buying nothing. Crikey, what a joke—eh, Wizzle! to hear Scorum—so polite! 'Oh, Mr. Herbert, or Mr. Thingamy, we are very sorry you don't suit us—give you twenty-four hours' notice, or a day's salary—I hope you'll get a good situation;' and you're obliged to go."

"But what am I to do if I cannot see the customer?"

"Well," asked Simpson, "and why couldn't you see Lady Gander?"

William informed him, when all the young gentlemen waxed exceedingly merry.

"I can tell you what it is," Simpson said; "I only wish as Scorum 'ud send me out—'tis such jolly good fun. Why, what you ought to have done is this here—you ought to have cotched the gals round the neck and gi'n them a jolly good kissin', and coaxed 'em out for a Sunday walk, and they'd a done your business like wax."

To this advice, William made no reply, when, after a pause, Simpson continued—

"And let me tell you, there's something good to be picked up that way. Why, you recollect, Nobbles, how Popples got hold of that lady's-maid when he was at Trafalgar House; it was the making of him; for she had saved up I don't know how many hundreds, and turned out one of the best shop-girls that ever measured a gown; and I wish you just the luck, Herbert, my boy—only you must look out, that's all."

"I believe I shall not improve my fortune in that way," William replied, with a quiet smile.

"Well, perhaps not," Simpson remarked; "for 'tisn't everybody that's born with such a silver spoon in his mouth as that there. But I'll be hanged if you wont get the sack if you don't sell. Why, I knew a young gentleman, and a desperate clever fellow he was, as was sent out with goods like you. Well, he went out twice, and come home out of luck; but the third time he was determined to sell, for he knew what he'd got to trust to. Well, it was to Lady Brumdel's as he was sent to next; and when he got in with the old lady, and shewed her the goods, as soon as ever the lady's-maid left the room and they were by themselves, I'm blessed if the chap as I'm talking on didn't take up the wrapper, wish the old lady good-by, and walk away home, and swear as he'd sold the blessed lot. Well, the goods was sent home, of course; but Mottle, my friend, swore as he agreed with the lady for 'em, and his principal brought an action and made the old lady pay every farthing, and the old man raised him ten pounds a year that minute. Crikey! wasn't that a splendid go, eh?"

"Why—a—I fancy," William replied—"I fancy that your friend perjured himself."

"Perjured himself!—well, perhaps he did; I never thought of it," quoth Simpson; "but wa'n't it a capital hit, gents? It shewed a man as was determined to get on in the world, it did; and I'll be hanged if he didn't deserve the ten pounds. But he is a real good fellow, out and out. But hark! there's Nobbles and Toppers a-snoring—good-night, all."

CHAPTER VII.

THE next day, William went again to the mansion of Lady Gander, when he gained a readier access by assuring the ladies of the household that the articles were the same as they had examined before; and though he did not follow Mr. Simpson's advice to work his way by means of a "jolly good kissin'," he was introduced to her ladyship, and displayed his wares to her great satisfaction. Lady Gander was a young lady of forty-five, of extreme beauty, the pure red and white of her cheeks being equal to any flake-white and carmine ever sold at Delcroix's, and her brown ringlets, unsurpassed by any "front" that ever decorated the window of Truefit. It was no wonder, therefore, that the lady was somewhat difficult in coming to a

decision as to the articles best adapted to adorn her charms. She laid a French crape over her naked shoulder, marched to the glass, remarked how it harmonized with her complexion, took her maid's opinion on the subject, and walked back for some other article which she subjected to the same process. She went on in this manner through the whole budget of female fineries, apparently satisfied with every experiment until she came to the last, when she knew not how to decide. She took up one piece and laid it down, and then another and another, until all the pieces were mixed up and interwoven into a bundle of inextricable confusion, laughing all the time, as she could afford to do, since she employed one of the first dentists in England: she then whispered awhile with her maid, and left the room, desiring William to inform his master she would call.

When William left Lady Gander's house to return home from his second unsuccessful expedition, he was not free from the trepidation so natural to a man who believes that he has forfeited the last chance of obtaining the necessaries of life. It may be supposed that, being a man of birth and education, he was above the fear of Scorum, who was the greatest man of

his family, and whose education amounted to no more than an accurate judgment in manufactured wool and cotton, and a steady perseverance in making money, and in keeping it when he had made it. But William was not one of those gentlemen who will live on their friends, or on the public, rather than have their consequence touched; and even the slight degree of pride of family and irritability when anything happened that could lessen his own self-esteem, which are some of the most lingering prejudices, had gradually worn away from his mind as he thought of his mother's distresses, and his own duty to make all lawful sacrifices to preserve his life. This now almost entirely depended on Mr. Scorum, and William therefore absolutely feared to meet him, and to avoid entering his presence in this predicament would have done anything in the world which would not have been dishonest or mean. But there was no help for his present misfortune: he went home and related his want of success. Mr. Scorum waxed blacker than ever, and a smile of contempt passed over his features as he listened to William's simple description of what had passed, from which he concluded that no attempt had been made to recommend the

beautiful colours of the dresses by the more brilliant flowers of eloquence. Mr. Scorum, however, said but little to offend—in fact, he merely reqested him, in a tone rather sharper than usual, to sit down again at his desk.

Mr. Scorum would doubtless have dismissed any other person who had failed as William had done; but several instances had occurred in which his knowledge of languages had been of decided benefit to the firm, and Mr. Scorum could not help admiring a man who could bring money to the firm in a manner impossible to himself. William therefore was retained, because it was very probable that in a short time his acquirements would be brought into play through his incessant diligence, and would do the firm more benefit than his present awkwardness or bashfulness could injure it. William was glad to find himself safe at his desk, and fancied that Simpson had mistaken or misrepresented the character of Scorum and his master, since he had not only not been turned out of doors as had been prophesied, but had not received an ill word worthy of notice. When, however, the young gentlemen were again in their dormitory preparing for their short night's rest, the subject was renewed, and after ex-

pressing their wonder at the unparalleled leniency shewn to William, the whole of the young gentlemen asserted, in the most positive manner, that if he failed again his expulsion would be a matter of positive certainty.

It was not with any very violent pleasure, therefore, that William received orders the next morning to take some goods to the house of a Mr. Burgess, in Berkeley-street, a gentleman supposed to be a solicitor, whose offices were in the city. It was indeed with a heart full of the most dismal forebodings that he took the packet on his shoulder, and marched out on the adventure, armed with his yard measure. Like all the rest of mankind that know lawyers, he did not like them; but rather felt that being sent to one of them was an omen that could not possibly mean any good to himself. He went as usual to the kitchen-door, when he found that Mr. Burgess was evidently not a man of fashion, since the door was opened to him without delay, and himself and his packet immediately ushered into a room where Mr. Burgess was sitting—a man of a rather advanced age, dressed in a plain black suit, with a face rather better than those of lawyers generally are, since, instead of cunning, trickery, and

cruelty, it expressed merely shrewdness, hardness, and carefulness.

"Put down your pack, young man, and open it," said Mr. Burgess; "my wife will be down in a minute."

William laid the packet on the ground, and began to unfasten the string about it; but coming to a knot which was troublesome to his nails, he took his scissors from his waistcoat pocket, and was applying it to the string, when Mr. Burgess sprang from the chair, ran up to him, and, confronting him, cried, with a loud voice—"You infernal scoundrel!—what the devil are you about?"

"I was about to cut the string round this packet," William answered.

"Cut the string!—whose string?" cried Mr. Burgess, in violent wrath; "and who does the string belong to? you—you——"

"The string belongs to Mr. Wiggins, I believe," William replied.

"And how dare you cut your master's string? Would you dare destroy the property committed to your care?"

"This string," William replied; "I picked up from the floor of the shop."

"And what if you did?" firmly demanded

the lawyer; "if you saw a five-pound note on my carpet, do you think you have a right to pick it up, and put it in your pocket? No, sir! If such a piece of string was trodden under foot, it only shews that your master has wasteful servants, for it as much belongs to him as any shilling in his purse. It is your master's property, sir; and I say, put your teeth and nails to it!"

William again put his teeth and nails to it; but the knot resisting his efforts, he looked up in Mr. Burgess's face, saying, "My time also belongs to my master, sir; and I am so vain as to believe that I can employ it in a way more profitable to him than in picking out this knot," when he quietly inserted the scissors, cut the knot, and spread open his bundle.

"What the devil!—" shouted Mr. Burgess, as he saw the scissors employed; and when he saw the package open, he continued, in a milder tone,—"You ought to have waited until I had answered your remark. But pray, young man, how long have you been a draper?"

"About a month," William replied.

"Ah! I thought so; follow me," was the reply.

Mr. Burgess led the way into a kind of store-room, where, pointing to a row of balls of string hanging on the wall, he asked, "Can you tell, young man, what those are?"

"They seem to me," William replied, "to be balls of string."

"You are right," the lawyer replied, "and learn from me how they came there. Sir, I have been in business thirty years, and never in my life cut a string; I always used my teeth and nails, sir. See, they are all ticketed—one foot, two feet, three feet, and so on. All these I have unwound from packages; and, sir, if I ever wanted a piece of string, I unrolled a ball consisting of pieces the nearest in length to what I required, until I came to the exact length; for I never cut away an inch, or left an inch to be tucked in, for the last thirty years. Sir, I have made thirty thousand pounds, and I should not have made one pound if I had not determined never to waste a bit of string. Follow me."

Mr. Burgess led the way back to the room whence they had come, when he rang for lunch, and opened a bottle of wine, and sat down with William to drink it.

"Young man," said Mr. Burgess, "there's

something about you that I like. If you have not gained a clear idea of economy, you have some decision and coolness, which are essential qualities to a man who has to fight his way through life. But, let me tell you, that a man who would cut his master's string needlessly, would rob his till; and there is only a difference of degree between destroying a piece of useful string and a bank note. If you have to make a living, you must take care of the small things as well as the large ones—that's how I got on, sir. But you say you have been a draper only a month; let me hear how that is to be accounted for."

William gave a short abstract of the adventures which have been described at length in the foregoing pages, to which Mr. Burgess listened with some interest, and replied,

"Ah, I see, young man, you will never make a fortune in London! You don't know the value of a piece of string, and it is too late to learn now. You ought to have come to London sooner, and with less money in your pocket. If you had had only one sixpence in the world when you passed by Hyde Park corner, you never would have cut a piece of string, and might have had some pounds in a savings' bank by this time.

Fill your glass, sir. Yes, sir, I can tell you, you might have laid the ground-work of a fortune before now."

"But," William asked, "do you not consider that the time occupied in picking a knot may be of more value than the string contained in the knot?"

"By no means, young man," Mr. Burgess replied; "no man ever lost by unpicking a knot. No man is so incessantly employed but he could make up for time spent in this way to avoid waste; and you are to consider, too, that you cannot answer for what may happen a few minutes hence, while, in picking a knot, you know you are usefully employing the present moment. No man, sir, that would cut a knot would earn a fortune. Look at the men who have come into London as beggars, and afterwards made fortunes—they were men who never cut a string; and of myself I may say that if I had set out in life with cutting knots instead of untying them, I should be as poor as you are."

William had many fears, during this curious dialogue, that he should have no better fortune than he had had the day before, since the austerity of the gentleman's rebukes, and his very

strict economy, implied the very reverse of a liberal disposition; but just as the lawyer had uttered the words which were last quoted, Mrs. Burgess entered the room, and desired to see an account of the articles William had brought, which, when she saw, she was contented with, and said she would keep the whole. Mr. Burgess handed over the money, and William gave a receipt, when the old lawyer said—"Now, then, let us finish the bottle."

"No, I thank you," William replied, with a smile, "my time belongs to my master; and I believe that if I spend my time in drinking wine before dinner, I shall find very little leisure to put in practice your advice to cut all my knots in future."

"Well, well, young man!" Mr. Burgess replied; "you have perseverance and honesty, and I like you for it, and when you come here again I shall have another talk with you. Good morning to you."

Mr. Scorum's countenance cleared when William handed him over the money for his package of goods, and he encouraged him with the hope of becoming a good tradesman; and, it may be observed, that in the few times after-

wards, when William went out to families, his success was equal to that of the average of young men, and Mr. Scorum, therefore, had not reason to doubt his address behind the counter.

CHAPTER VIII.

It has been said that William Herbert had not, during the month which he had spent at the Wellington House, personally witnessed anything which made him doubt the excellence of the parties who had rule over him; but a day or two after his visit to Mr. Burgess, a circumstance occurred which by no means gained his admiration. A complaint was raised against one of the young gentlemen behind the counter, on account of an alleged difference of a few shillings between the amount of the bills he had sent up to the clerk, and some hundreds of pounds' worth of goods which had been entrusted to his special care for sale; although it ought to be stated that objections had been

previously made against the young man, on the ground that, though a well-meaning, honest person, he had not, in selling his goods, displayed a sufficient quantity of that passionate admiration and persuasive eloquence, which all drapers consider all their goods so richly deserve. On the morning after this complaint had been made, a larger gathering than usual of the young gentlemen of the establishment took place at family prayer, when Mr. Wiggins singled out the person complained of, and addressed him, in the presence of the company, as follows:—

"Mr. Dopson, information has been conveyed to me that a deficiency of several shillings exists between your account and that of the clerks, respecting the linens sold at your counter. Now, though God forbid that I should be uncharitable in my opinions, and therefore I do not suppose you are dishonest, yet, out of regard to the respectability of this establishment, I cannot suffer this circumstance to be passed over."

"I am sure I know nothing about it," whimpered Dopson.

"I don't say you do," was the reply; "but in an establishment like this, it is necessary to be

exact, and nobody who does wrong now-a-days ever thinks of confessing it."

"No," interrupted Mr. Scorum; "even the young gentleman that we transported denied to the last."

"Well, Mr. Dopson," said Mr. Wiggins, "we wish to deal leniently with you; and, therefore, as you do not suit us, Mr. Scorum will pay you a day's wages, and you will leave at once."

"Leave!—I have never robbed you of a farthing," Dopson cried aghast.

"I don't say you have," Mr. Wiggins replied with great mildness; "I leave it to the Searcher of Hearts. But I must preserve the purity of my establishment."

"It is a very hard thing to be turned away in this way," Dopson said in despair; "but, gentlemen, if I must go, I hope you will give me a character."

"Why, Mr.—a—Dopson, I should be happy to render you any assistance in my power; but I am a conscientious man, and how can I give you a character considering the reasons why you are leaving us?"

"But, sir, I am innocent!" Dopson cried. "For God's sake, sir, have mercy on me—con-

sider, sir, that I must be totally ruined if you refuse me a character!"

"It is quite impossible, Mr. Dopson, under the circumstances, and I am sorry it is so, for I have Christian feelings towards you. Be silent, Mr. Dopson, you cannot alter my determination, founded as it is on conviction."

"But consider, sir," cried Dopson, his eyes filling with tears—"consider, sir—I beg you—my poor mother, I am her only child, and she has got no other friend in the world but me, and if you turn me away without a character, you will break her heart as well as ruin me."

"I can't help that," Mr. Wiggins replied; "you ought to have looked to that. I shall act justly with the assistance of grace, and you must take the consequence." Then turning towards the company assembled, Mr. Wiggins continued—"At such a time as this, young gentlemen, it is highly proper that you should be reminded of your duty, and I make it an invariable rule to endeavour to improve the wickedness of any one of my assistants on the hearts of the rest. For this purpose, Mr. Jabber has kindly consented to come and address you; and I trust you will pay strict attention to his

exhortation, and let it sink deeply in your hearts."

Mr. Jabber then arose, and having smoothed his long thin black hair over his forehead with the palm of his hand, and hemmed two or three times, read a text of Scripture, on the punishment of dishonesty, and exhorted his hearers. But his eloquent address, however well it might be adapted to accomplish its purpose, struck William Herbert as somewhat unjust and unfeeling, since the reverend gentleman took as his groundwork the absolute guilt of poor Dopson, which seemed by no means certain. The poor fellow appeared ready to sink to the earth in shame, while Mr. Jabber addressed him as a hardened sinner, and warned his fellows by his example; and it was in a state of unconsciousness that he sank on his knees with the rest, when the parson said, "Let us pray," which turned out to be a means of pressing more closely to the dust the heart of the young man, since the prayer consisted of petitions for the reformation of a certain impenitent criminal in the company, and for the preservation of the rest from following in his steps. When this ceremony was ended, Mr. Scorum said to William, "You will go down to the shop immedi-

ately, and take Mr. Dopson's place; and any assistance you may want, you can get from the others. The parcel and window business is most particular; but they'll soon put you in the way of it."

William went down and took his place behind the counter, not altogether pleased with the events of the morning. He was rather disposed to admire Mr. Wiggins's strict honesty and care for the morals of the young men under him, but considered that those virtues had in this case been practised at the expense of Dopson, whose guilt had not been demonstrated to his conviction; and he decidedly disapproved of the tone adopted towards him by Mr. Jabber, which seemed calculated only to wound his feelings, and hold him up to the hatred of his former companions.

But this rising discontent was soon laid for awhile at rest by the influx of customers, and the necessity of giving all his attention to his own department of the business. The day passed away pleasantly enough, as he found sufficient work to keep himself constantly employed: but one or two things in this first day of counter-business puzzled him a good deal, the first of which was that, after selling a variety

of articles to a lady who had a servant with her, and laying them on the counter in readiness to make into a parcel when the order was finished, they were made up by another shopman, who rapidly substituted other articles of similar appearance to those which he had sold. The other thing which puzzled him was, that, after he had served a lady, who had no servant, with some goods which she said she would herself carry home, another shopman came up and requested to be allowed to send them. This the lady would not permit, as she said she could take them with the greatest convenience; but as the shopman waxed more pressing as the lady appeared more determined not to trouble them, and at length went so far as to assure her that it was a rule of the establishment never to allow a lady to be burthened with goods purchased there, she at length consented, and expressing her thanks for their politeness, went away, followed by a shopman bearing the parcel. Now, during this little altercation, William had observed a young man at another counter making up a packet composed of articles seemingly the counterpart of those the lady had bought, which immediately after she had departed a young man took up and

carried into the street. After a few minutes, the latter young gentleman returned, bearing a parcel which he laid before William, and which, when he opened it, he found to be the very parcel he had sent out. In obedience to his instructions, he put the articles on the shelves whence he had taken them; but during the remainder of the day was puzzled to comprehend the meaning of this transaction.

At night, however, when the young gentlemen were preparing for bed, William had an opportunity of learning the meaning of what he had witnessed; since, as a matter of course, subjects so interesting to all assembled would be very elaborately discussed and explained. Nobbles made some remark on the expulsion of Dopson, when William asked if they did not consider that he had been hardly treated.

"Why, 'tis hard on Dopson himself, to be sure," Simpson replied; "but then you see 'tis all his own fault or his mother's. You see, when a woman ha'n't got but one son, she always wants to make a gentleman of him at once, and so apprentices him to a draper. They don't consider whether they're cut out for it or no; but whether they've got good talents or whether they haven't, they must be made gentlemen of.

Why, I've known many fellows in this here concern, that I've no doubt would have made very respectable grocers, or builders, or ironmongers, or things of that kind; and, Lord bless you, they were good for nothing as drapers. It is a great pity people should be so ambitious, and not stick to things in their own spear, 'cause 'tis always found out in the long-run, and they get served out for it; and though 'tis hard on a young man, what's to be done if people wont learn their business? What do you think people should keep 'em for?"

"But was not Dopson well acquainted with the business?" William inquired.

"Do you think Wiggins would have turned him away if he was?" said Mr. Nobbles.

"I understood," replied William, "that he was dismissed because he was suspected of dishonesty."

"Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!" was the response from every person in the room, but in an under tone, since laughing was not allowed at the Wellington House.

"I tell you what it is," said Simpson, when he had recovered his gravity, "I'll be hanged if I thought there was anybody in town who was so soft, to say nothing about a man as can talk French and Dutch, and all that. Why, Her-

bert, Wiggins and Scorum knew very well as Dopson never robbed 'em of a farthing; they'd ha' pulled him up before the beaks in a moment if he had?"

"Why did they dismiss him, then?"

"For the same reason as they dismiss all the young gents, 'cause they don't suit. Dopson was bashful, and used to talk about honesty; and therefore was not a first-rate salesman, and so Scorum turned him away to put you in his place; for the truth is, you know, Herbert, you're a good-looking fellow, and I should think would do a good deal of business with the old ladies at your counter."

William did not notice this compliment, but asked in wonder — "Why was not the true reason assigned for dismissing Dopson?"

"Oh," quoth Simpson, "Mr. Wiggins always takes the opportunity, when he turns away a young man, to give the rest of us a lecture about honesty, from Old Jabber."

"Well," said William, "there seems to me to be something so monstrously unjust and cruel about this transaction, as you describe it, that I cannot believe any human being would be guilty of it, much less upright and worthy men, as Mr. Wiggins and Mr. Scorum."

"Oh, ah! to be sure," Simpson replied, with

a peculiar look of humour; "very upright worthy men, is Wiggins and Scorum, and you'll find it some day, I'll be bound."

As Mr. Simpson said this, William was surprised to see a broad grin spread over the countenance of every person in the room, which created in his mind some strange and undefinable suspicions, when what had happened at his counter in the past day occurred to his mind, as though in some measure connected with them, and he asked the meaning of what he had witnessed.

"Why, Mr. Herbert," inquired Simpson, "didn't Scorum instruct you in the counter-business?"

"The counter-business! why, now you mention it, I remember that he said something about it. He told me the young gentlemen would instruct me in it."

"Well, you know, in course, that all our ticketed prices are gammon?"

"What, do you mean that they are fictitious? I was not aware of it."

"Well, you know it now. Of course we can't sell by those prices, as we always mark those goods twenty per cent. under prime cost. This, you see, is only for a draw. People sees

slap-up articles in the windows and about the shop, marked at astonishing low figures, and they come in for what they want, expecting everything beside is as cheap. But if the person fixed her mind on the ticketed things, all you've got to do is to persuade them that other articles, which you shew them, are of better quality, and then you'll do very well. But if the customer is an obstinate fool, and will have the very things with the tickets on them, and you have no means of persuading, or no other things just handy, you will do up the things on the counter, and another young gent will change them for things which we can get a profit out of at such a price. Why, didn't you see Hickson a-putting a piece of black silk in the parcel this morning, instead of the one you sold?"

"Is this all true?" William asked, in amazement.

"True!" cried Simpson, "to be sure it is. It is what we do every day—we could not keep our places without it."

"And do you not consider it very dishonest?"

"Why a—Mr. Nobbles—what do you say? The fact is this, Mr. Herbert, it's all honest enough in the way of trade. We can't afford to

sell a shawl for a pound that cost us thirty shillings, and therefore, when a person takes a liking to one with that mark, we are obliged to manage so as not to lose anything by it, and so put in a fifteen shilling one instead. To-day you were letting a lady go away with the parcel she had bought, when Hickson tried to get it left, and when she went away, with one of our gents following with the parcel, Hickson was obliged to send a fellow after with a packet of articles of the same kind to exchange for the other on the sly, by which the firm could get a little profit."

"I did not suppose such villany was practised in the world," said William.

"Villany!" exclaimed Simpson, in surprise; "I assure you the young gentlemen in this establishment are as respectable as any that I know, and Wiggins and Scorum are really as good fellows as we generally meet with in the trade, and I am sure would not cheat anybody out of a farthing, unless in the way of trade—which is no harm, or they would not have such a precious lot of prayers said over us. They're a little sharp with their young gents, to be sure, but that's their only fault. But about this window business, we don't force people to come into the shop; we only put up low prices to persuade

'em; and it is not to be supposed that we're a going to sell at a loss. No, we sell them what we can get a profit out of, like any other concern in the trade. All houses do the same as ours, and if you or I was to take a concern to-morrow, we should do the same—for it's the only way of carrying on business. Besides, people as keeps shops must sell as much as they can; and it's people's own faults if they're took in—eh, Nobbles? Do you think they'd do us?—not they. People should learn to be awake."

"Well, if all that you tell me be true," William replied, "this establishment is carried on by a system of monstrous fraud."

"Ah, I should like to hear you tell Wiggins or Scorum so, eh, Popples?" rejoined Simpson. "They would soon walk you after Dopson."

"I *would* tell them so this moment, if necessary; and I *will* tell them so if I discover, to my own conviction, that you have told me the bare fact."

"Well, you will have an opportunity soon; for people asks for things out of the window every hour, and none of them's for sale—they're all ticketed articles."

"If I am asked for an article out of the window," William replied, "when I am serving there,

I shall certainly sell it at the marked price, in defiance of every one."

"Well, well!" cried Simpson, jumping into bed, "we shall see, my boy. Only, I must tell you, if you do, we shan't have the pleasure of your company much longer—eh, Nobbles? But, 'tis my maxim to do just as the firm expects, and take care of my own pocket—eh, Popples? what do you say to that? People should keep their eyes open when they spend their money. I'll be hanged if anybody 'ud ever do—me—very—brown."

CHAPTER IX.

WILLIAM HERBERT slept very little during the night after the above information had been gained. There was a meanness as well as a magnitude in the wickedness described to him, so different from his preconceived notions, that he lay meditating on the subject, and questioning himself as to how he ought to act, without the power to sleep. Two things alone he decided on—one of which was, that he would not condemn Mr. Wiggins or Mr. Scorum without positive proof; the other, that he would never be prevailed on, whatever might be the consequences, to practise any kind of trickery on a customer.

This latter resolution was soon put to the test; for the next day, before dinner, as William was at his station behind the counter, a lady

walked in and requested to be shewn a certain handsome muff in the window, marked at sixty-three shillings. William was moving towards the window to hand it to the lady, when Hickson, who was next to him, touched his arm, and handed down a box of muffs, which he commenced spreading out on the counter.

"I will not trouble you to shew me all those muffs," the lady said; "I wish merely to examine that one which I noticed in the window."

"I assure you, ma'am, upon my honour," Hickson replied, "that these muffs are of precisely the same kind, with the advantage of a larger assortment to choose from."

"I do not particularly wish to purchase a muff," the lady replied, "but the one I saw in the window seemed so well worth the price, that if it please me as well, on looking at it closer, I shall be happy to purchase it."

"I am sorry, ma'am," Mr. Hickson said, with an engaging smile, "I am sorry that you have decided on that one; for it takes us three hours every morning to set out our windows, and it is a rule of the establishment not to disturb the articles during the day."

"Then I am to understand you decline to let me have the muff?"

"I assure you," Hickson replied, "I shall be

happy to shew you all the muffs in our stock; and I am certain you can do better than by purchasing the one in the window."

William stood on one side, in the greatest confusion, while this conversation passed; but just at this juncture Hickson was sent for, who, casting a look of cunning at William, left him to conclude the transaction. William took several muffs from the box, at which the lady glanced, and asked the price of them. William looked at the private marks, and found the prices to be from three to five pounds.

"I do not exactly understand this," the lady said, "these muffs are made of the commonest fur, and are of a higher price generally than that in the window, which, I am sure, is of sable."

Now William could have suffered the lady to leave the shop without purchasing any article whatever, but her last remark seemed so much like accusing him of an attempt to cheat, which was altogether contrary and repugnant to his nature, that he immediately took the muff from the window and placed it before the lady, who at the first glance was perfectly satisfied with it, and laid on the counter the price marked on the ticket. William made out the bill, and took it, with the money, to Mr. Scorum's desk, where he met Hickson, who asked him, in a whisper,

walked in and requested to be shewn a certain handsome muff in the window, marked at sixty-three shillings. William was moving towards the window to hand it to the lady, when Hickson, who was next to him, touched his arm, and handed down a box of muffs, which he commenced spreading out on the counter.

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the desk, till we have a little leisure, for I see you will never do for the window business."

William sat down at the desk, and Hickson, drawing a faint line between the 6 and the 3 on the ticket, went back to the counter to persuade the lady to purchase one of the muffs which were for sale, or to make her pay 6*l.* 3*s.* for that which she had chosen, and lay the additional charge on the carelessness of Mr. Herbert in not reading the price aright.

When the day's work was done, and the shop closed, William, although it was his turn to stay in the shop to fold up the goods, and see everything in order, was sent for to join the party at family prayer.

"Mr. Herbert," said Mr. Wiggins, who sat in his easy chair by the fire, which no one besides durst approach, "Mr. Herbert, I have something of importance to say to you; take the chair opposite to me. Mr. Scorum has informed me that you have not only acted contrary to the rules of this establishment, but have actually refused to obey a positive command of his."

"Yes, sir, and I —"

"Mr. Scorum—Mr. Scorum, stop him immediately!" cried Mr. Wiggins, in apparent distress.

"Mr. Herbert," said Mr. Scorum, with great

what he had done, and William said he "had sold the muff in the window which the lady had wished to see."

Hickson stooped for an instant, and whispered in Scorum's ear, when that gentleman turned about and demanded, as Hickson, to know what he had done.

"I have sold one of the muffs in the window at the price attached to it," William replied.

"But, Mr. Herbert," said Scorum, "you have made a mistake; that muff is not for sale."

"It was in the window with its price marked," William replied.

"Ah! to be sure," Scorum said, "but only as a show article, to attract notice. Why that muff is worth more than five pounds! Really, Mr. Herbert, you must step back to the lady and explain that it was a mistake."

"I must beg to decline doing so."

"I insist on it, sir."

"I have declined, Mr. Scorum."

"What — you positively will not get the muff back?"

"Certainly I will not, after I have sold it."

"Hickson, just step down and inform the lady that it is quite a mistake as to the muff, in consequence of having a new shopman; and you, Mr. Herbert, please to sit down again at

"Mr. Herbert," said Mr. Wiggins, when had composed his feelings from the shock occasioned by William's use of that very awkward term, "I would have you to know, sir, that this establishment is of the highest respectability, and that if I supposed any person under my care was capable of a dishonest action, I should instantly dismiss him. No, sir, I attend personally to the morals of my young gentlemen; and when I inform you that I have transported five of them, I think you will repent, and be sorry for your calumny, and be convinced that I take strict care of the honesty of the people under me."

"Perhaps our notions of honesty are somewhat different," William replied; "you expect honesty from your servants towards yourself; but if I continue to be your servant, I shall endeavour to be honest to your customers also."

"And when was any other requested of you?" Scorum asked.

"I need not answer that question," was William's reply.

Mr. Wiggins appeared somewhat puzzled when Scorum whispered a few words in his ear, and his principal said, "I shall not condescend to answer your silly objections; for let me tell you, you must be very little acquainted with

the world, if you suppose that any establishment is conducted on more honourable principles than ours. What!—do you think we are to sell articles at a less price than they cost?"

At this remark, all the young gentlemen present gave way to a small and hesitating smile of derision; when Mr. Wiggins turned to them, and said—"You see, young men, an instance of the ingratitude which a kind action always produces. Here is a young man whom I took out of the streets, who knew nothing about the business, and had no character but from a church-parson. Yet I was willing to make a man of him; when he flies in the face of all our established rules, and endeavours to corrupt you all. I am surprised, young man, at your ingratitude to one who has behaved so well to you, and really, if it were not for grace, I should be inclined not to be kind again. My duty to those under my care, and whom you would have corrupted and turned to disobedience, compels me to make an example of you, for I should have thought your education might have taught you better, though little good is to be expected from them as goes to church colleges. I ask you once—only once, mind—if you answer improperly, I have done with you for

ever—will you obey the rules of this establishment?"

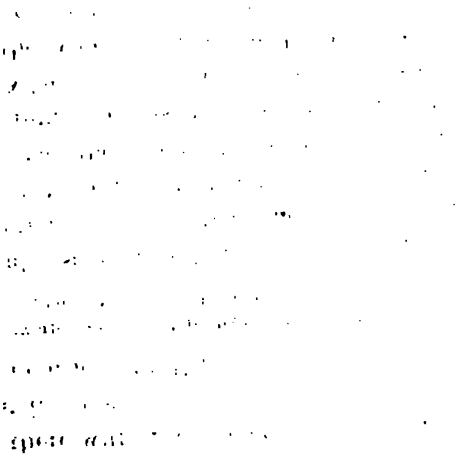
"I will never—" William replied, "I will never substitute secretly an inferior article for one that I have sold; nor will I persuade any person to give more for a bad article in your boxes, than for a good one exhibited at the same price in the window."

"Leave the house this moment—you—you—and beware how you enter it again, lest I hand you over to the police!"

As Mr. Wiggins said this in high wrath, he arose from his chair, and all the young men seemed at the same time to be preparing themselves to carry into effect any order of their master; but after a short pause for reflection, Mr. Wiggins waxed milder, and said, in a very religious voice, "But, young man, I will not put you forth at this late hour without hope; for we are just going to prayers, and you may stay till we have done, and who knows but a word or two may fall on your heart, and bring forth fruit."

William said that he doubted whether any form of prayer could make him a rogue; and left the room and the house without a single "God speed you" from any individual in the Wellington House.

BOOK THE SIXTH.



CHAPTER I.

WHO is there with any pretensions to poetical taste that has not been struck with the beauty of the conclusion of "Paradise Lost:"—

> "The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide."

Poetical justice, as well as the judicial dignity of the action, required that the transgressors should not be unpunished, while poetical taste required that the poem should not conclude with a painful impression; and, therefore, the sinning Adam is dismissed to his wanderings through the wide world, the melancholy of his fate subdued by the thought, that he has Providence for his guide, and the well-beloved Eve for his companion. The pain of the sentence is relieved by the images of protection and comfort.

But how many millions of matter-of-fact human beings are there now existing who could not discover anything like punishment in our forefather's sentence, but would gladly own the most barren acre of the world, whose whole beautiful extent was his to choose an estate from! How many millions are there who, without committing a fatal transgression, have not only not a world to choose from, but not even a spot in the world which they can call their place of rest; and, instead of having the world before them, are—what is grammatically the same, though practically, how different!—behind-hand with the world!

Imagine the pale and hungry artisan, who plies his thin and corpse-like fingers from sunrise to sunset in the crowded and unwholesome shop, whose windows are made to admit nothing but light, or at best command only a view of chimneys and housetops. Imagine such a man when he takes to the care-worn companion of his wretched hovel the earnings which will not purchase sufficient of the coarsest food to supply an infant family—oh, imagine such a man sentenced to go out into the open air, and the green fields of the beautiful world, and reap the fruits of his labours! Imagine the little shopkeeper in the great city, who, after giving up his conscience

to the will of his customers, and starving himself and his family to pay to the last farthing his creditors' demands, finds himself at last in the debtors' prisons, and his family in the streets. Imagine him sentenced to the plains and dales of the world, where industry could ensure bread and independence, and where he could find a place of rest. Imagine the child in the factory, early in the morning, late at night, and all day long — crippled, beaten, and unpitied — compelled to the regular labour fit only for the full-grown man, while her young heart is yearning for the sports of her age, which nature designed her to enjoy; her only good the poisonous atmosphere which will certainly prevent her misery from attaining an old age. Imagine that child sentenced to the fields, and birds, and flowers, and brook-sides, for which God has filled her heart with an instinctive love. Imagine the husbandman, who tills the ground to produce corn which he may not eat, whose sons become soldiers for the protection, and whose daughters prostitutes for the pleasure, of a master; whose labours result in riches for the landlord, and a workhouse for himself. Imagine such a man sentenced to till the ground with the sweat of his brow, with the liberty to eat the fruits of his tillage!

Yes, there is a wide difference between poetry and fact. The millions of the world cannot feel poetry—its pleasures, as nearly all other pleasures, are reserved for the few. The princess who wondered why people *would* starve in a famine, and expressed her ability to support life on bread, and cheese, and ale, rather than die of starvation, could feel the burthen of Adam's punishment. The rich and the mighty can feel it; they can understand the torment of not consuming more than they produce; but this torment would be an overpowering felicity to the hosts of human beings who are in the world. But how entirely must experience be forgotten — how entirely must the hearts of the vast majority of mankind be changed before they could comprehend the punishment of our forefather! The severity of that justice can be felt only by those who, above the grovelling want of bread and actual necessaries, can go back into the distant ages of fancy, and sympathize with picturesque miseries; who could be sorrowful for the criminals in the court of love, when the heaviest sentence was a month's suspension from the privilege of wearing his lady's glove. But how little can the many sympathize in such miseries; and how different seem those poetical tortures when brought into comparison with the usages of real life!

In our days such a sentence would be bitter enough, as millions on millions know by experience; but it would be widely different. If an Adam were now sent forth with "the world before him," before he had tilled a yard of ground he would have his spade taken away and be kicked off the premises; he would be served with a summons to appear before a bench of landlord-magistrates, a notice of action—"*Doe dem. Mudbrain*, versus *Adam*," or at least a notice of action of trespass. Adam would find that the world was already divided, and that all he could claim would be six feet by two and a half—the only landlord who would not dispute his right of occupancy, the churchwarden; and the only spade he could command, the spade of the grave-digger.

CHAPTER II.

THE Wellington House had not been very much like a paradise to William Herbert; but when he left it he was, in one sense, pretty much like Adam,—"the world was all before him." But in one very important particular he was unlike our great progenitor, though like many millions of the poor creatures of our Divine Parent, he had not "where to choose his place of rest." All the rest he could hope for must be procured by money, which was the very thing in which he was most deficient. There was little of the speculative or the fanciful in William's late determination; it was bread or no bread—life or starvation—the simplest terms on which a man can form a decision. If these two fundamental antitheses had found their way in their natural strength to his heart, he would undoubtedly have decided in the popular way.

But there is another thing to be considered—he was an unfashionable young man; he had a conscience too intelligent and sturdy to be moved by the pliant advocacy of the heart; and, giving way to the straight-forward pleading of honesty, it decided against bread.

"The world was all before him." But what was that world? Not the world of green slopes, far-spreading corn-fields, and fattening cattle by the river-side. That world was all partitioned and possessed before; the world which lay before him was the world of men. But that is not, like the physical world, one compact and harmonious mass; but consists of a thousand little worlds eternally separated by a mutual and incessant repulsion. The rich men have their world, and the poor men theirs. There is one world of masters, and another of their slaves. The body of Tories are a world to themselves, and the Whigs are another to themselves. There is a world of professional men, and a world of tradesmen; a world of churchmen, and a thousand worlds of dissenters; and all these worlds can never, by possibility, come in contact with each other, save as the cork balls suspended over the charged Leyden phial, to be immediately repelled by a mutual antipathy. To which of these could Charity plead in her own

name? Would the Tory acknowledge any other plea than that of church and state?—the dissenter any other than liberty and his own peculiar tenets?—the rascally attorney, and the sycophant apothecary, anything besides respectability?—or the tradesman anything besides family connexion? No. The lines between them all are drawn as decisively as those between the different races of beasts; and the man that requires charity might as well apply to the howling denizens of the forest as to a man, unless he possess the shiboleth of the party to which that man belongs. Now, of all these worlds, how many were there in which William Herbert could hope? He had been a gentleman; but he had appealed in former times to the world of gentlemen, and had no desire to repeat the experiment. He had been an author; but the world of publishers promised very little. He was a churchman, and, of course, could not expect aid from a world of dissenters. He had been a linendraper—yes, the world of linendrapers was before him.

It was not the time now to be fastidious in forming resolutions, or dilatory in executing them. The essentials of life were in too great peril to admit of much attention to its ornaments. Necessity prevented a world of dis-

cussion, of doubt, of speculation. No sooner did he think of the honourable society of drapers than he set about procuring a situation. The only means he could think of was to revisit the register-office, where he had formerly procured a situation. But he was not so fortunate now—there was not a situation vacant, and he came out half-a-crown poorer than he went in, which sum was demanded by the gentleman behind the counter for booking him. William's half-crowns were not so numerous as to enable him to visit many register-offices at the same rate, nor to enable him to wait the result of booking. He went into one of those convenient houses where you can get a cup of coffee and a "Times" for a penny. There was no lack of situations there. He copied the addresses of forty-nine gentlemen who wanted, or said they wanted, assistants, and set out to call on them.

The first address which he had copied was Messrs. Diaper and Co's, a great west-end shop. He blushed as he read the advertisement—"of good manners—obliging disposition—unobjectionable morals—pleasing person—undeniable references—first-rate education—highly-respectable connexions." Dear reader, do not believe that William was not a modest man, when I tell you that this was the first address copied by him;

he so copied it, not because he fancied that his own accomplishments equalled the description in the advertisement; but because he thought that a firm which required so much in the assistants must be themselves very superior and very particular men. Such were the men he desired to serve—men above the paltry tricks which had forced him out of every path of industry and every recognised circle in society; for however he might fail in the accomplishments required, he was determined that a good master should not have to complain of his want of endeavours to acquire them.

Mr. Diaper received him very graciously, and examined him very narrowly. He forced him to give him the history of his life and his pedigree; inquired as to the nature of his religious feelings, and asked if he had ever been convicted of theft, concluding with a very adventurous history of his own life, which had made him what he was. He then informed William, that of all the forty-three young gentlemen that had replied in person to that morning's advertisement, he was the one most likely to suit; and after taking down Mr. Wiggins's address, desired him to call again that day week.

William Herbert was a friend of mine, and friendship should be as sacred as death—"nil

nisi bonum" should be said of the friend as of the dead; but the sanctity of historical truth compels me to admit, what will make all my knowing readers despise him, that he actually believed Mr. Diaper to be in earnest, and waited a week without making application for any other situation.

At the end of the week, when, according to appointment, he waited on Mr. Diaper, he was informed laconically that he would not suit, and became aware of the extreme folly of his conduct. The sudden thought that he had spent nearly half of his capital since that day week, aroused him to a very alarming conviction of his danger. With the pardonable anxiety produced by the fear of want, he asked Mr. Diaper to favour him with an accounnt of what Mr. Wiggins had said of him, which, as a matter of course, Mr. Diaper declined doing, merely stating that the character given was not what suited.

Here was an important consideration, which William had not thought of when he behaved so independently to Mr. Wiggins. He had then thrown himself from assured bread into the uncertainty of procuring it, rather than become what he considered dishonest; but he did not consider that Mr. Wiggins might pre-

vent him altogether from the possibility of earning bread. This was a matter of enormous importance. The salary William had received at the Wellington House had been about three shillings a week—eight pounds a year being the wages paid to the porter and the junior shopman; and when the reader considers the washing, mending, purchase of new articles, an occasional trifle disposed of as pocket-money, and the articles of necessity, which the Wellington House did not "find their young men in," it will be seen that he could not be expected to save much out of three shillings a week. Up to this time he had not thought of Mr. Wiggins as one capable of influencing his future prospects, and probably, if that gentleman's report of his character had been favourable or just, William would never have mentioned the circumstances under which they had parted: his disposition was not to carry tales; but now, as he began to perceive that the wrath of Mr. Wiggins might be fatal, he well considered the subject, and decided that he was bound, by the law of self-preservation, to rebut Mr. Wiggins's insinuations by a plain statement of facts, and he had no doubt but that he should be successful.

He again consulted "The Times" of the day,

and, marking down a list of names, before dusk had called on nineteen gentlemen, all of whom unhappily he found already suited. Next morning he arose early, and took his breakfast at a coffee-shop near the office of "The Times" to secure the earliest possible perusal. He started with his list in good spirits now, thinking it unlikely that any applicant could have more abundant reasons for an early application than he had; but he was very much amazed to find, that even at this early hour, most of the advertisers were suited. He was so ignorant a tradesman as not to know that to advertise for shopmen and apprentices is a disguised and powerful mode of advertising an increasing trade. But, of course, all the advertisers were not of the same kind; one in ten, perhaps, really wanted servants, and with these he had some chance, as he happened to be the earliest applicant to several of them. The first of these, Mr. Dowlas, made the same inquiries that Mr. Diaper had done, and, professing himself disposed to approve of him, promised to call on Mr. Wiggins in the course of the day. William's fortune was reduced to such extreme smallness now, that he did not, on the strength of this promise, go home and wait; he was compelled to persevere. The next gentleman on whom he called, said it was a rule

with their house not to take any assistant who had not served a regular apprenticeship. The next inquired if he were a converted character, assuring him that none but such entered his establishment. Another gentleman said they always required a security of three hundred pounds for their young gentlemen's honesty. The remainder of those that seemed disposed to treat with him, requested him to leave his address and his references, and if they were found to be suitable, they would write.

Such was the result of one day's adventures in search of labour—a result not warranted to convey any considerable degree of pleasure, even if it allowed the possibility of hope. He seemed only to have gained one chance for fortune, which was the appointment to meet Mr. Dowlas the next morning, and this gave him one more comfortable night. But when William called, Mr. Dowlas shook his head, and gave the old reply—he was very sorry Mr. Herbert did not suit. William was now become desperate: positive, inevitable starvation was before him, and he earnestly requested Mr. Dowlas to inform him of what Mr. Wiggins had said. To this Mr. Dowlas replied—

"Why, young man, he has said what you know you deserve; and I must tell you, that being aware

of it, I wonder you should apply to me or anybody for a situation, or refer to Mr. Wiggins. But some people have no modesty."

"But what did he say?" repeated William.

"He made me acquainted with the whole of your ungrateful and riotous conduct in endeavouring to excite a mutiny among the young gents, and accusing your master of dishonesty, after he had actually taken you naked out of the streets, and taught you the business."

"Did he inform you, sir, what salary he paid me?"

"Paid—salary—young man!—why, you ought not to have had a farthing—you ought to have paid him, sir, a considerable sum of money, sir, for the instruction you received, sir. And why not, as well as an apprentice?"

"But, excuse me, sir, this is beside the business. If I have derived any benefit from Mr. Wiggins, I will willingly acknowledge it, when I know what it is. At present I wish to learn whether Mr. Wiggins acquainted you with the whole of the particulars respecting our separation?"

"I am sorry to inform you that he did."

"Nay, sir, you should be sorry for Mr. Wiggins, not for me, who have done nothing to render myself the object of pity. But, sir, I

believe that Mr. Wiggins has misrepresented me. I conclude so, from your remarks, and I beg of you, as a favour, to allow me to inform you of the whole truth. I am in such distress, that I dare not neglect an opportunity of relief."

"Say what you like, young man—say what you like," Mr. Dowlas replied, with indifference; "I have told you you don't suit."

"I hope, Mr. Dowlas, your opinion may alter when you have heard my statement, the truth of which I am prepared to maintain on my oath."

Mr. Dowlas put on the air of a listener, and William related the whole of his connexion with the Wellington House, just as the reader has had it. When he had finished, Mr. Dowlas replied, coolly—"I knew all that before; it's just what Mr. Wiggins told me."

"Did he really relate it as I have done?" asked William.

"Precisely; and I wonder at your making such confessions while applying to me for a situation."

"Confession! Sir, I am not aware that I have confessed anything. But surely, sir, you must see the enormous fraud of Mr. Wiggins's trade, and the terrible wickedness expected of his assistants?"

"Fraud! wickedness!—you young jackanapes!" cried Mr. Dowlas, in violent wrath. "Get out of my house this moment! You ignorant scoundrel!—why, 'tis the very way in which we all conduct our business; and you'd have known it, if you'd been apprenticed in a respectable way, instead of being took in out of the streets. And do you come here to tell me that my trade is a fraud?—me, who carried on this establishment, sir, for nineteen years, sir, without a slight imputation on my character, sir? Get out of my house, I say, or I'll send for the police. You a situation! Go to the devil for one—you'll never get one in our trade, I know!"

Fairly pushed out of the house, William made the best of his way home, thinking that perhaps some of the gentlemen on whom he had called might have written to him. But such was not the case—no person seemed to require his services. He was not only pained, he was amazed at the violence of Mr. Dowlas. He had fancied that the indignation of any honest man would be roused against Mr. Wiggins's transactions; but perhaps—it was just possible—he had not yet found that honest man. William doubted whether he should ever become a clever tradesman; but what was he

to become?—how was he to live? He looked at the shrinking stock of tea, and butter, and sugar, in his little sitting-room, and he looked at his money, the only means of replenishing them; but the money had shrunk faster than anything else, since the consumption of everything made an attack on that. Something must be done, and soon; he had provisions for three days, but what must be done when those three days were over! Away he went again on his rounds through the shops of the great metropolis, offering himself for the lowest offices and the smallest pay, but without success. Security, or a long character in the trade, would have shortly produced a situation; probably in a month or so, something might have turned up for him; but he could not wait: he had only a fortnight's provisions when he left Wellington House, and when that was expended his fate was fixed.

"Yes, London," as he formerly exclaimed—"London is a city illustrious for her charities." It would seem that the whole range of human casualties and crimes had been noted down, and the misery consequent on them provided against by the benevolence of London. To say nothing of the workhouses for the aged, is there a disease, saving fashionable ones which people

are fond of—is there a disease for which an hospital has not been provided, and if not cure, attendance, so comforting to the sick, secured. Are there not hospitals which take in at once the whole range of diseases and accidents!—Are there not penitentiaries for the wicked, schools for the blind, princely establishments for the maimed, and even a comfortable asylum for the prostitute? Yes, this was all true, and William did not suppose that there was another city so philanthropic in the universe. But one unsatisfactory thing in all these excellences was, they did not exactly suit his case. He was not so fortunate as to be lame, diseased, blind, dumb, a sailor's orphan, an old sailor, a Cherokee Indian, a thief or a prostitute; and therefore not one of those excellent institutions would have done anything for him. He was merely an honest man who had no money, and he could discover no institution for such a case in all the lists he procured. London abounded in rich men, rejoicing in the opportunity of doing good; but William was so unfortunate as not to know the address of any of them, and perhaps could not have told the kind of tale which draws their purse-strings. Thus in the centre of a circle of benevolence and brotherly kindness he, like many before and after him,

was in imminent danger—nay, in almost the certainty of perishing for want of a bit of bread.

Some such thoughts as these passed through William Herbert's mind one morning as he left his lodging, and walked through the streets with a sharp and agitated step. He continued to walk without a pause through the day, and when night came, he did not go home. He did not walk late in the night from pleasure or from habit; neither at the Wellington House, nor while writing his work, had he found time or inclination for night rambles. He would have been glad to go home now; but he was afraid. He fancied he had no right to go home; he feared to meet his landlady. He was not in debt—no, no, thank God! he owed nothing; but when last night he went to bed supperless, all the money he possessed was only sufficient to pay her what he owed. ' His books were with her, such at least as were unsold; and if he were to sell the few that remained, what would he do after? and how many days or hours would they keep him from starving? After paying the landlady, he had left home that morning with an empty stomach, ignorant where to go to fill it, or whether it would ever again be filled, seeking no longer for the means of earning a livelihood, so thoroughly had he

been disappointed in all his former endeavours. The last crisis of his fate had arrived; famine not only looked him in the face, but fixed her talons in his entrails. He formed no determination against or for selling his few remaining books, or the clothes which he wore—he thought not of the subject; those luxuries, or even necessaries of human society were of little importance, when considered in comparison with wants and passions which destroy all artificial considerations. He did not think of this in that feverish, rapid walk which endured from early morn until night—he was considering what there was in the world for him to do. Should he go home to his mother's cottage?—could he go and live on the little income which so wretchedly supplied his mother's wants?—but how could he go without money? and could he write home to ask for what his mother could so ill spare, and which, if she had it not ready, he knew she would sell even her own food to procure! Could he risk such a misery as this? These thoughts were the distracted visions of horror created by his circumstances, rather than premises on which he could arrive at a conclusion. He could not conclude on anything; he had no choice. In whatever direction he turned for hope, he found a terrible and irre-

sistible spirit, with a sword like that which guarded the entrance of Eden flashing full in his face.

In conflict with thoughts of horror and suggestions of despair did William Herbert, throughout that long day, wander about the streets of London, without a meal, or a certainty that he should ever again procure one. He continued to walk till nearly midnight with an unslackened pace; but this rapid walking for twenty hours, to a man who had eaten one small meal in the last forty-eight hours could not but make an impression on the body. As midnight drew nigh, and the streets became quiet, (he was among the squares, and the long dull streets in the aristocratic part of the city;) as the sky began to look blue and clear, and to discover the stars, the houses assumed somewhat of a supernatural character. His eyesight became impaired; the shadows of a lamp-post assumed the outline of a giant threatening him; the corner of every street hid a band of indescribable monsters, waiting to attack him, the terror of which made him dart by with the wild speed of one beset with an evil spirit. His ears became affected; the sound of the voice of a passer-by was the murderous murmur of his foes, from which he sprang away with a mad-

dening swiftness; the rattle of a coach was the thunder raised by the evil one, and the laughter of his tormentors. He utterly lost every idea as to what part of the city he was walking in; he recollected not that he was in London; he walked on, unconscious of the turnings, and proceeded mostly in a circle. All this time he had suffered a cruel headache; his flesh felt like fire, while it shivered with an intense sensation of cold; his tongue was hot and dry; his throat was parched and collapsed; if his toe touched a stone, or unwarily stepped an inch below the level of the other foot, he fell from a tremendous precipice. At length he suddenly stopped with a sense of giddiness. He was near the entrance to a court; he thought he was dying, and every creature rushes from the general gaze to a place of quiet to die in. He turned up the court, but no sooner had he turned than the distant lights danced before his eyes; his head turned, and twirled, and rushed round with a motion of indescribable swiftness, and he fell to the ground insensible.

CHAPTER III.

When the consciousness of existence returned to William Herbert, he found himself in such a situation as he had never been in before; and which he had at first considerable difficulty to comprehend. He was lying on a rough and not over sweet bed, which seemed to have been formed of old wearing apparel, thrown hastily on the ground in the moment of some pressing necessity. He knew that he must be in a room, since he saw what seemed to be white-washed walls, through the thick darkness around him; and there was a closeness and want of ventilation that assured him he was not in the open air. He endeavoured to rise and examine into what had happened, and into his own situation; but found himself utterly unable to move from his horizontal position, as

the attempt made him sick and giddy, and shewed him to be as weak as an infant. At length, after lying a considerable time in a half-insensible state, vainly endeavouring to make out some definite object through the gloom around him, he saw a few faint dots of light glimmering on the walls, and heard heavy footsteps ascending from far below his chamber, when, struggling violently, he contrived to turn himself towards the side whence the light seemed to proceed. The footsteps approached the door, when a key was applied to what sounded like a very ponderous lock, the door flew open, a man and woman entered, and the door was again locked.

"Jack, I want to speak to you," the woman said to her companion, in a low voice, as they turned from the door.

"You be d—d!" the gentleman replied: 'listen to me. The blue devils were after me o the corner of the street; but d—'em, I have lodged 'em once more. Here, Sall, take care f these till old Moses comes up."

So saying, the gentleman handed over half a zen watches, some brooches, and other finery, hen their conversation sank to a muttering that s inaudible to William, who now made a more ct examination of the scene in which he was

placed. The heap of filthy rags on which he was lying was in a corner of the room opposite the door, so that he might have laid there unseen in the darkness by one who knew not that he was there, while he could see pretty well what was passing throughout the room. It should be stated, that the man, as soon as he entered, took a dark lantern from his pocket, which he turned and laid on the table, its flashing light directed towards the almost empty grate, which gave out a little smoke, but contained scarcely a spark of fire. By this, William could see that the room was very low, indeed hardly high enough in the loftiest part for a man to stand upright in it; and was probably the top room of a very lofty house, since, on two sides the walls bent inwardly, so as nearly to meet in the centre, and through the four or five panes of glass in the window which were not filled up with leaves of copy-books pasted over fractures, or pieces of cotton prints stuffed into them, William saw a star or two peeping brightly through, and caught a glimpse of the roof of another house, which seemed not to be more than a couple of yards from the window. The room contained no furniture, properly so called, the only things in it being the heap of rags on which William lay, a three-legged table, which stood before the grate,

and rocked to and fro whenever it was touched, and a couple of rush-bottomed chairs, one with a broken leg, and both with the bottoms worn out, and the rushes hanging on the ground. But on the bit of wall over the fire-place William saw, with surprise, not unmingled with fear, a great number of articles of a much gayer appearance than the rest of the room. This was a row of nails extending across that end of the room, each holding suspended an implement, seemingly of very careful manufacture and preservation, but of shapes and characters entirely unknown to him, and well adapted to create suspicions of a dreadful nature in the mind of a man weakened by sickness and famine. He first discerned four pistols and a gun, all of different shapes; then a couple of stout glittering blades, that appeared to be a kind of dagger, better adapted for use than for ornament; then a couple of cutlasses, highly polished; then some short bars of iron with wooden handles; then several thick pieces of wood, having a handle hollowed out at one end, and a round lump of lead inserted at the other; then some chisels, a large bunch of keys, and many articles that seemed to be tools of some kind, the use of which he did not know. When it is stated that the room was excessively dirty,

and that the atmosphere was that of a place which the pure air of Heaven is seldom allowed to penetrate, William may be forgiven, if some emotions of affright mingled with his curiosity.

Nor was there much in the persons of the inhabitants of the room calculated to dissipate the terror which a view of the room created. The man was dressed in an old ragged shaggy great coat, and his hat was pressed low on his forehead; yet when he came within range of the lanthorn, William could discern that he was a large, powerful man, with a very evil countenance; for his small bright cunning eyes were nearly hidden by his thick and louring brows, his nose bore the mark of having been broken in some affray, and his long fleshless lips, at an enormous distance from the nostrils, wore an unchangeable expression of cunning, hardihood, and cruelty. The woman had somewhat more of a human appearance. Her gown and cap were ragged and dirty, and her hair was loose and dishevelled; yet, through these disfiguring accidents might be discovered in a regular and even delicate outline the traces of former beauty; but this outline was now filled up with the ghastly hues produced by trouble, night-watching, and wickedness; and although the woman could hardly have seen her thirtieth year, the

dimples of youth had given way to the deep and ineffaceable wrinkles of age. While William was thus examining the room and its inhabitants, which occupied about a minute, a muttered and rapid conversation continued between the man and woman: but his observations were suddenly stopped by the man calling for liquor, when the woman took a spirit-bottle from the cupboard, and filled him a cupful, which he swallowed at a draught. While the cup was yet in his hand, William, fancying their eyes met, slunk back in the corner, in doing which, he made a slight noise, which reached the quick ears of the man, who immediately dashed the cup in the fire, snatched a pistol from the wall, and sprang across the room, crying, "Damnation! what noise is that! Trapped, by G—d!" Before, however, he could do any mischief, the woman sprang after him, and, holding his right arm with both her hands, cried earnestly, "Mind what you're at, Jack, for God's sake! 'tis only a poor boy."

"Poor boy, be d—d! he shall never tell any tales. Let go my hand, you strumpet, or by God I'll send a ball through you!"

"Jack, Jack, kill me, if you like," the woman cried, still retaining his arm, "but don't hurt the poor lad!"

"Let go my arm, I say."

"Give me the pistol, then."

"Give you the pistol! D—n you, is that your game! There, then, take that." Saying this, the ruffian struck the woman on her eye with his left fist, with such terrific force, that the eyelid puffed up instantaneously as large as an egg, blood streamed over her face, and she fell on William, from the sheer force of the blow, bewildered, though not insensible.

And happy it was for William that she was not totally deprived of sense, for as the ruffian took hold of her by the shoulder to toss her into another corner of the room, that he might execute his will on William, she again seized his arm, crying, "I tell you, Jack, you shall kill me before this young fellow."

"What! you infernal strumpet, is it a cully of yours, then?"

"Stop, Jack, dear Jack!" the woman cried; "don't say such words to me; you know that I have been true—you know I have."

"You've been afraid of a foot of cold steel, my wench; and you should have had it if I had cotched you. But let go my hand, or I'm d—d if you shan't have a ball. I'll see whether we have got a spy or a bully; and I'll forgive him all he ever tells when he gets out."

While the man was struggling to shake the woman from his pistol-arm, she contrived to seize the lanthorn which stood behind on the table, the light of which she darted into William's face, who had with much difficulty raised himself to a sitting posture, and looked certainly not much like a dangerous enemy.

"Why, Sall, you've got a dead man here! What the h—l's the meaning of this?" said the ruffian, when he saw William's face.

"It's a poor starving lad that I saw fall down at our door, and nobody would look at him; and I brought him up here a minute or two before you came, to give him a bit of victuals and a drop, and send him on again. That's the whole truth, Jack, so help me God!"

"Then why the devil didn't you say so before."

"So I would, Jack, only you wouldn't give me time; I tried three or four times."

"And what the devil have you to do with sick men in the street? Why can't you let them die and be d—d? It isn't the first time you have took up fellows like this in the street, and I'm d—d if you wouldn't hang me if I let you go on. But 'tis the last time! Here, lend me a hand, and I'll soon put him into the street again."

"Why, Jack, he can't stand. The poor fellow will die if he's turned out now. Just let him stay a bit, and as soon as I have given him a bit of something to eat, I'll let him go."

"Well," muttered the ruffian, "a man's always sure to come to bad if he has anything to do with women; they've always got some d—d folly or other. But look here, Sall, this is all about it," continued the ruffian, his countenance losing somewhat of the fury which had hitherto distinguished it; "this as you've told me may be all a d—d lie; you women are so infernally cunning; but mind this here, I am going out for an hour, and if I find that cove here when I come back, I'm d—d if I don't do for him. I'll never be trapped by man or woman; if I do, d——e!"

The ruffian went down stairs, and as he descended, the woman stole to the door, where she stood in the darkness listening with an eager and terrified air to the sound of his feet, until she heard him open the street door, when she sprang to the window, where she continued to watch him until he disappeared in the distance. She then locked the door of the room, and, lighting a rush candle, went to William, who had become insensible. She took the bottle out of which the ruffian had been supplied, and

placing it to his lips, the strong stimulant shortly revived him.

"Young fellow," said she, "can you eat anything?"

William nodded, for he could not speak; when the woman threw some sticks on the grate, set fire to them, and put on a saucepan in which she boiled some water and bread. This she set aside to cool, while she mixed some gin and water; she then took them both to William, and supporting him with one arm, fed him with a spoon as though he had been a child. As soon as he seemed to be somewhat revived by the food, the woman asked him, "Can you walk, young man?"

"I don't know," William replied, very faintly; "I feel giddy, but I will try to walk if you will help me to rise."

The woman put her arms around him, and assisted him to stand; but leaving him a moment to try his strength, he fell back again on the bed utterly helpless.

"Poor young fellow!" said the woman, "have you any friends I can send you to?"

"No; I have no friends in London," William replied; "my mother—my mother—my dear mother!"

"Where is your mother?" asked the woman.

"In the country."

"There is no time to send for her," the woman said, in a hurried manner; "you must go directly, young man; for if you stay, he will turn you out in the streets, or—or—"

"Help me then, my dear friend," William replied; "help me down to the street, and put me out, and I will get away somewhere—you must not be injured on my account."

"And are you afraid for me, young man?" the woman said, while a flood of tears streamed over her face; "I did not think anybody would ever care for me any more."

She covered her face with her hands, and sat down on the bed. After a few seconds, she knelt at William's side, and said, in a whisper, "If you will do your best, I will endeavour to help you. Lean on me, and walk as well as you can."

She then led him, or rather carried him to the door, which she unlocked as softly as she could, and desiring him to hold by the door-post for a moment, she drew a ladder from a secret recess, which she fixed on the landing-place, and supported against a door in the roof. She ascended the ladder, opened the door, and descended; she then set William's foot on the ladder, and standing behind him, forced him

gradually up, until they both stood on the roof; when, drawing up the short ladder, and carrying it under her arm, while she supported William with the other, she led him along the house-tops until their course was stopped by battlements or parapets, crossing their path, when, looking over, William discerned that they were on the edge of a lane between two lofty houses, and he felt sicker than ever at a mere glance down the vast precipice. They sat down silently in the kind of trough formed by the parapet and roof, until a thick black cloud passed over the moon; when the woman, first glancing hurriedly below, laid the ladder across the lane from parapet to parapet, and then put a board on the ladder. She stepped across the terrible chasm and back again, to give him confidence, and requested him to follow. But scarcely able to stand, he was utterly incapable of crossing the frightful bridge; but at length, as he comprehended that it was his only chance, if he would be attended to by the woman until he was somewhat stronger, he took the ladder with both hands, and crawling on his knees, with the careful assistance of the woman, he at last contrived to reach the other side. The woman drew over the ladder, and again took it under her arm, and after another walk of considerable length

among chimneys and trap-doors, they came to a door which she opened with a key. She dropped the end of the ladder into the house, stepped on it herself, placed William's foot on it just on a level with her own bosom, and so guided him down. When they were both on their feet, she put an arm around him, and guided him in perfect darkness down two flights of stairs, and finally led him into a room where she laid him on a heap of straw, and begging him not to move or speak, left him with a promise to return before day-break.

CHAPTER IV.

THE events of the last hour had been so entirely unprecedented in the experience or knowledge of William Herbert, that they seemed for a while only the disordered visions of a distempered imagination, and he lay between sleeping and waking, speculating as to the truth or falsehood of what he had witnessed. But being somewhat revived by the food he had taken, the very weakness of his body now produced a sensation of repose which was not disagreeable: and before he had made up his mind thoroughly as to the reality of the events in which it seemed he had been engaged, he fell into a deep and peaceful sleep.

When he awoke once more, the meridian sun was shining into the room, and he could examine the scene in which he was placed. No-

thing could be seen through the windows, save some house-tops a hundred yards distant, by which he concluded he must be in one of the squares. The room was very large, and judging by the embellished cornice, chimney-piece, and ceiling, appeared to belong to a magnificent house; but it was totally unfurnished, save by the straw on which he was lying. William felt much stronger since his sleep, and was exceedingly hungry; and it was therefore with no faint emotions of pleasure that, on examining the room with his eyes, he saw some bread, some slices of meat, and a bottle of spirits, with a jug of water placed on the floor within his reach. He knew that the kind woman who had assisted him had visited him during his sleep; and the thought that he still had a friend near him was very sweet: he ate some of the bread, drank heartily of the water, and once more fell asleep.

He slept many hours; indeed, so many, that when he awoke, it was quite dark; and even then, perhaps, he might not have awoke, if he had not been aroused by some one pulling him by the arm to awaken him. In his present weak state he felt greatly alarmed, but he made out in the glimmering star-light the outline of a woman, and was composed.

"Young man, how do you feel?" whispered the woman.

"Giddy and weak," William replied, "but very much better than I was, thanks to your kindness."

"I have brought you a little wine," the woman said; "mix it with some water, and it will do you good."

"Thank you," he replied, "but I think I can walk now; you had better let me go, if you think the ruffian will strike you again."

"No, no, young man," was the reply; "you must stay here a little longer, and get more strength. I can only visit you at night, when everybody's asleep; but I will contrive that you shall have something to eat; and if you follow my advice no danger can happen to either of us."

"I will do everything you wish, as though you were my mother."

"Well, then, young man, confine yourself to this room entirely. Do not move about more than you can help, nor speak aloud, nor cough, if you can help it. But, above all, do not go nigh the window; for if you should be seen, it would very likely be the death of you, to say nothing of me."

William gave his promise, when the woman wished him a good night, and left him.

The woman performed her promise to visit William every night, and bring him something to eat and drink; and in the course of a week he felt little remaining of the exhaustion under which he had sunk, saving a little giddiness at any sudden movement, and a feebleness and uncertainty of foot, which was gradually wearing away as his appetite grew sufficiently hardy to attack more substantial food. But when he had been in the house about a week, he was one morning somewhat surprised to find that he had slept through the whole night without interruption, and that there was no food whatever at his bedside. He feared that something bad had happened to his kind benefactress; for there was a passionateness in her manner which assured him that she would not willingly neglect him, and that assurance made him consider himself bound in honour to act just as she would have desired him if she had been present. He sat on his straw throughout the long day without once rising on his feet, and without moving, save when he reached the water-jug to drink, which was the only nourishment he could hope for before night. His thoughts wandered

back to his earliest years, when all the luxuries of life were within his reach; then he thought of his favourable progress at the university, the sudden destruction of his hopes, the ruin of his family, and the long array of troubles he had fought with since; but through all his reflections and fears, a fragment of hope clung to his heart. His conscience did not aid his sufferings, by oppressing him with the conviction that he had deserved all he had borne; and the fact that he had found a friend in his utmost extremity confirmed his belief that the eye of Providence had not overlooked him, and comforted him with an inward assurance that these trials would terminate in something good. In want of employment more suitable to his present circumstances, he sat through the day repeating the verses of Homer and Æschylus, and working problems in the mathematics with his pencil on the floor, as though he were to stand an examination in the next term. He had been too well used to hunger lately to feel the want of food during a single day, and when he fell asleep at night it was without a sensation of want or other violent pain, though undoubtedly he fervently prayed that the woman who had been so kind to him might visit him before next morning.

But morning came, and found him in the same condition—without food or the expectation of it, and with a sharp sense of hunger that he could not doubt would be an intolerable torture before night. He well knew the pain of a famishing wretch to be insupportable—the thought of it was very dreadful; a fear, like the approach of madness, stole on him as he looked at his empty jug and the bare room. The operations of his brain became confused, and his eyes incapable of a clear vision, as the hours dwindled away with a lingering pace, and quickened his senses with a more intense anxiety—making the moments of existence stand out as distinct portions of time through the innumerable sensations with which each was crowded, every one of which had its own separate pain or terror. Remembering, however, the terms which his benefactress had imposed on him, he sat with tolerable quietness through several long hours glaring with blood-shot eyes on the walls, until, an hour or two after mid-day, pinched by a horrible pang like the grating of a saw through the collapsed organs of digestion, he lost all recollection of past circumstances; he fancied he had been decoyed into a prison to die by starvation, and sprang on his feet to rush to the door: but as he arose he became giddy, his head seemed

to be whirled round with a rapid circular motion, his feet gave way, and he fell flat on his face insensible.

When he again recovered his senses, it appeared to be within an hour of sun-set; he raised himself on his hands and knees, and looked around him: everything was in the same state—he was starving, and there was no kind of food in the room. All artificial sentiments were now absorbed by a natural appetite—the strongest that man can obey. The impulse of honour gave way before that of hunger. Yet in that dreadful moment, when the rotten filth of the dunghill would have seemed to him the richest luxury, and all thought in the world save how he should procure food would have been impossible, a dim remembrance or impression of what he had promised, or what had been required of him, governed without informing his mind, and he crawled towards the door on his hands and knees in the strictest silence, and with the utmost care that no person beyond the walls of the house should discern him. The door, as he had before discovered, was locked; but that difficulty was soon overcome—he forced his pencil on the bolt, and it gradually slipped back in the lock, and he stood in a passage or landing-place above a flight of stairs. He sprang down the stairs in a moment, and

rushed into the first room he saw; it was a magnificent drawing-room, entirely unfurnished. He burst open the folding-doors of an anteroom; this also was entirely empty; and on examining all the rooms on the same floor, they appeared not to have been occupied for a very considerable time, and he descended another flight of stairs, which took him to the ground floor. He traversed the hall, or passage, through the house, and tried the doors—they were fastened with padlocks; and when he turned to the rooms, every door he opened displayed nothing but impenetrable darkness: he knew that the windows were fastened, and that the house was utterly uninhabited, and again ascended the stairs. But he ascended even more eagerly than he had descended. Hunger was producing fever, and fever was disturbing his conceptions of all that his senses witnessed. He sprang up from the darkness as though he had been pursued by a thousand hideous phantoms and spectres, and every shadow was invested with limbs and ghostly organization, and seemed to threaten him with evil. His eyes were turned back over his shoulder as he rushed up; the very paintings on the walls were snatching at him with imaginary fingers, and the echo of his own footsteps struck terror and horror into his soul. In this state of mind he examined all

the rooms on the floor where he had been during the last week, and finding them also empty, ascended towards the roof. The house was five stories in height, as he saw by ascending the fourth flight of stairs, above which he could discover nothing besides a ceiling, in which was a closed door. The rooms on this floor, like all the rest, were empty; and he stood aghast, tormented with the tremendous agonies of starvation, and hopeless of escape, as his strength began to fail, and he doubted his ability to descend the stairs to appeal to the passers by. But while he was speculating on his terrible fate, he heard a sound which seemed to be in the house, and which resembled the murmur of a human voice. He listened with a beating heart and a fluttering breath, amazed and terrified; the sound appeared to be in a room close to him, which he had already examined, and of which the door stood open. He entered it on tiptoe, and looked slowly and cautiously around; but though the sound was still audible, he ascertained that the room was certainly unoccupied, when, following the apparent direction of the sounds, he discovered a door which he had not previously seen, and beyond which some human being undoubtedly existed. He tapped at the door, but no answer was returned;

he spoke, with the same result; when, seizing the handle, and pulling it with the furious energy of madness, it flew open. What he saw filled him with amazement and horror. This room, like the ruffian's chamber previously described, was immediately under the roof, in which was a casement that admitted the faint light of the rising moon, which was yet sufficient to display the contents of the room. There was neither table nor chair; but in a corner opposite to the door was a bundle of rags and straw, on which lay a person half-naked, looking up with a vacant countenance on the streaming moonlight, and talking as though he were addressing some one in the sky. It was a man seemingly very old, for his face was one mass of wrinkles, his chin was covered with a white beard of many days' growth, and a little matted and dishevelled grey hair hung around his forehead. William stood for a moment rivetted to the spot with fear and horror, doubtful whether he was in the presence of a human being or no; when, seeing by the side of the bed a loaf, some meat, and a jug of water, he rushed forwards, broke the loaf in two, and sat down by the old man's side to devour it. He sat during some few seconds unnoticed, and noticing nothing himself save the loaf of bread and the water;

but feeling a slight movement he turned towards the old man, who at the same moment became aware that he was not alone.

"Where is Polly?" cried the old man, stretching out his white, thin, transparent hands, and glaring at him with a wild eagerness, which gave to his deep-seated eyes, sharp thin nose, and sunken mouth, an appearance of preternatural emaciation and horror. "Where is Polly?" repeated the old man, wildly.

"I have not seen her for two days," William replied, concluding, of course, that the old man asked for the person who had brought them food.

"Oh, Polly, Polly!—why don't you come?" cried the old man, vehemently.

"Don't be alarmed, old man," William said, in a soothing manner, but without ceasing to eat. "She will be here again soon; you see she has left you plenty of food."

"Has Polly been here?—has she!—has she!" the old man cried, eagerly, and partly rising as he did so—"where is she? Polly, Polly, come here—'tis your grandfather calls you."

"Hush, hush, old man!" said William—"don't make a disturbance now. Wait a little. Here is plenty of food. Come, take a piece of meat, and a little of this delicious water, and I will wait with you till Polly comes."

"Polly, Polly!—will she come, really? Have you seen her? and did she say anything about her poor old grandfather?"

William's senses were sharpened to the utmost pitch by excitement during this conversation, so that the faintest sound could have scarcely escaped him; yet he heard nothing, and it was therefore with an alarm, as though some one had arisen from the dead in his presence, that he felt his arm grasped by some one behind him. He turned his head slowly, and beheld the woman who had saved him from perishing.

"Come with me this instant," she whispered in his ear.

"I am very glad you are come," William replied, continuing to eat, without rising; "I have been almost starved, and this old man has been asking for you."

"Polly, my dear little Polly, where are you?" cried the old man.

"He does not mean me," the woman said to William; "he is always calling out for somebody that he calls Polly."

"And don't you know whom he wants?"

"No!" was the reply; "but come along with me this minute. I can get you out of the house now; another minute, and it may be too late."

"But what does the old man here?"

"Ask no questions, as you value your life; save yourself, and be content."

"Look at the poor wretch drawing figures in the moonlight," said William, pathetically, "the poor old man, half naked, and out of his senses —something must be done for him."

"Come along, I tell you, this minute," said the woman, in a vehement whisper, seizing his arm at the same time; "take care of yourself, and let other people do the same. Your life will not be safe under this roof an hour longer."

"My life I value but little, now," William replied; "I have no place to go to in all the world; and I will not leave the house without knowing something concerning this poor wretch."

"Young man, young man!" she cried—"you will destroy yourself and me. Drink this wine, and follow me."

She put a cup of wine in William's hand, which he took to the old man; and, after forcing him to drink a portion of it, he swallowed the remainder. The woman was standing by the door, and as William turned towards her, she went out, through the next room, to the landing place, when she ascended a ladder placed against the doorway in the ceiling, which was now open, and beckoned him to follow. But, William refusing to ascend, she came down, shut the door,

and laid the ladder on the ground, when William taking her hand and pressing it, said—

"My dear, good woman, you have saved my life, and suffered cruel injuries in doing it; I respect and love you as though you were my own mother or sister. I would give my life to protect yours; but I cannot leave this poor man without being satisfied as to his fate. Look at him on that heap of wretched straw, old and feeble, turning his vacant eyes to the light, in search of some dear object he has lost—who is he?—what is he?—what has brought him here?"

"Come below a minute; we are in danger here," the woman said, and they went down to a room on the next floor. "I can save you now that you can walk," said the woman, in a low voice; "but you must go at once and alone —you must leave the old man to his fate."

"Why, I have never injured anybody," replied William, "and yet am in danger, and the old man must be in danger also if I am. How came he here?"

"Ask no questions," cried the woman, hastily; "time runs fast—in a few minutes it may be too late—follow me."

"And can you, who have been so kind to me, let this old man lie there, in this imminent danger,

without attempting to save him? Did you never know what it was to have a father?"

"A father!—my father! my dear father!" suddenly shrieked the woman, in a tone which bore the accent of heartbreaking grief, though stifled by a seemingly habitual caution, and covering her face with her hands.

"Come, come, my good woman," said William, putting his hand affectionately on her shoulder, "you are a kind-hearted creature; and I am sure will endeavour to save this poor man. If you can get him out of the house, I will go, and will do all I can to assist you."

"No, no," she sobbed, "it is too late; we shall all perish, unless you obey me; you must come alone, or we shall all be—be——"

"Murdered," said William. "Well, so be it. I will stay by the poor man above, and protect him as well as I can, and if I can do no better I will dash out the window, and alarm the neighbourhood; for I gather from your words, that he has been brought here for some evil purpose, and that violence is intended towards him."

"I cannot stay now," the woman replied, in a very hurried manner, "I have over-stayed my time—I shall be suspected—promise to keep yourself quiet until you see me again—you will find plenty of victuals in your room—do not shew

yourself at the window; and beware of sleeping, or your life will not be safe a moment. Somebody else may come in, he—my——"

"Your husband?" asked William.

"If my master finds you in this house, it will be the last moment of your life. I will fasten the door in the roof in such a way that it can't be opened without noise, and when you hear it, go down to the cellars on your bare feet, and hide yourself until I fetch you. But I would rather you would go with me at once, and put yourself in safety."

"I will not leave without knowing something of the old man," William replied; and the woman left him.

CHAPTER V.

When William Herbert found that the woman had left the house, he stayed but a few minutes alone: anxiety respecting the old man in the upper room led him almost immediately up to his chamber or prison. The room was highly illuminated with the light of a full moon, so that everything in it might be distinctly seen; and as William looked on the old man, brought into such painful circumstances to carry out some deed of monstrous villany, and saw him vacantly describing figures in the moonlight, and heard him call out for a lost grand-daughter, so beloved that her influence seemed to exist when his mind had thrown away even the instinct of self-preservation, and he seemed to be utterly insensible of his condition, he longed with the utmost eagerness to be of service to him. He took

hold of the aged man's extended fingers, and found no more resistance in them than in those of a new-born child. Every bone in his body seemed to have been broken, or every joint loosened, so passive were they to the will of another. The main-spring of the machine—the key-stone of the arch—the mind of the man was gone, and his body lay, a tottering mass at the disposal of every external circumstance or accident. It appeared at first, from the utter helplessness of the wretch, that he was an irrecoverable idiot, on whom no impression could be made by outward things; yet this very unconsciousness of his situation was a proof of his perfect harmlessness, and made him an object of greater interest to William than any man would have been in similar circumstances, if able to struggle in his own defence.

The old man suffered his arms to lie where William placed them, as though he had not power to refuse the guidance of another will when his own was gone; he looked earnestly in William's face for a moment, and then said, doubtfully—

"Polly!—it isn't Polly, is it?"

"No, I am not Polly," William replied; "but I will wait on you as carefully, if you will allow me."

"Dear me! dear me!" said the old man, doubtfully; "surely, you are not the man that beat me, are you?"

"Not I," replied William. "I would not beat you for the world; and nobody shall ever beat you again, if I can prevent it. But come, take some food, and drink out of this jug, and you will be able to assist in getting out of this place."

The old man, if a correct judgment might be formed from his present appearance, had not been used to eat and drink very lately, for he was so thin that not only might every superficial bone in his body be easily traced, but they all stood out from the shrunken flesh in bold relief, like those of a corpse a few days after death. But when William, with the earnestness of active benevolence and kindness, like that of an affectionate son, pressed him to eat and drink, and put food to his lips, the old man ate and drank heartily. When he had not only done this, but had been prevailed on to wash himself, it seemed that his imbecility had probably been merely the confusion consequent on some terrible fear, combined with want of food, and of the ordinary conveniences and decencies of life; for though the old man did not now at

once enter into rational and enlightened conversation, yet he evidently comprehended what William said, and replied with a degree of directness that could not have been presupposed from his appearance.

"Where is that man that beat me?" asked the old man.

"He is not here," William replied; "don't be afraid of him—he shall not hurt you."

"And you will not let him burn off my arms and legs one after another!"

"No, no, to be sure! But did the wretch threaten such a terrible thing?"

"Yes; and held the candle to my fingers, to make me feel what it was. But who are you?"

"Tell me, first, how you came here."

"Why—why—I don't know," the old man replied, putting his hand to his forehead, in a bewildered manner; and then, as though smitten by some fearful recollection, relapsing into insanity, he continued—"but—a—a—perhaps you are one of his friends; and he told me if I made any disturbance, he would kill me. No, no; I shall not tell you anything, for you only want to tell him again."

"Come, come, old man," replied William, with an accent of kind familiarity; "you must

trust me, for I am a prisoner, as I suppose you are; and who knows whether I may not release ou, and take you to your grand-daughter."

"Oh, Polly! my dear little Polly!" cried the old man, tears running down his face; "shall I see you again? Do you know my Polly?"

"No," William replied; "but when we get out of this place, you shall make me acquainted with her."

"Acquainted with her!" cried the old man, seizing William's hands, and looking eagerly in his face; "do you know where she is?"

"No."

"No, no, no; I shall never see Polly any more—she is gone for ever!" cried the old man, throwing himself back on the bed in despair.

The indestructible affection of the old man for his grand-daughter made William give him credit for more merit than possibly he had ever possessed: it seemed to him, that a heart could not be very bad which had preserved a natural affection through such trials as he must have endured; and, seating himself at his side on the bed, he took his hand, and said—

"Cheer up, my good man, and tell me how you came here. Don't be afraid of me, for I will serve you, like a son, and I have no doubt that in a few hours I shall set you at liberty."



"I forget everything besides our
plied the old man, with a bewildered
"What is your name?"
"You will not tell the man that be
"Oh, no!"
"Well, my name is John Benson."
"Well, Mr. Benson, I am glad you
me so much. Now answer me quickly-
always lived in London?"
"No; I never was in London b
should not have come now, if it ha
for Polly."
"Where did you come from?"
"I came out of the country to find
"And who brought you to this ho
"The man that beat me."
"And why does he beat you?"
"He thinks I have some money, a
me to make me tell where it is, and

"Oh, I was walking one evening, and looking for our Polly, when, just as it got dark, a coach stopped close to me, and this man jumped out, and forced me in in a moment, and the coachman drove off; and this man put a great pistol to my head, to make me keep silent. The coach stopped at this house, and I could see nobody to speak to, and the man dragged me along a passage, and then up the stairs to this room."

"And why did you not throw up the window, and appeal to the passers by!"

"Oh, that would never do," the old man replied, "for I did but beg him to let me go, when he knocked me down with a pistol, and when I came to myself I found I was fastened to the ground, and the man swore he would kill me if I made the least noise."

"And what is this Folly, whom you have lost?"

"Did I not tell you that she was my granddaughter? Oh, she was such a nice little girl—such pretty blue eyes, and long curling hair—and then, her voice!—nothing in all the world was so sweet as to hear her say, 'dear grandfather!' How many times has she climbed up my knee, and fell asleep with her arms around my neck, —and we loved her so, and she was so fond of us; and yet," cried the old man, wiping his

tears away with the back of his hand, "and yet I shall never see her again! She will never say *dear grandfather* to me any more!"

"And how old was this child when you lost her?" William inquired.

"How old? Let me see—when did Harry go away? Well, five, ten—but I can't reckon it up now—it was all written down in our great Bible; but she was such a pretty child, and I shall never see her any more, never—never!"

"And did this dear child die?" William asked.

"Die!" repeated the old man, shuddering; "that's what I thought, and yet I don't know—why should she go away from her grandfather to die! There was nobody in all the world that could love her as we did; for we had nothing besides to love—and she was such a pretty and affectionate child! Some people thought that some strangers—some robbers, or ruffians, waylaid her; but that isn't true, for there's nobody in the whole world that could be so cruel as to injure such a dear little girl as our Polly!"

"Do you mean, then, Mr. Benson," William asked, "that your grand-daughter was actually lost?—that is, that she disappeared, and you know not what became of her?"

"Yes; that is the fact," said the old man, crying afresh. "You must know, I was a tradesman, and was doing very well, and had saved up some money, and had a boy and girl, as fine a couple as one would wish to see. Well, they grew up, and married; my son became a tradesman, and my daughter married a merchant, who used to go abroad all over the world; and once, when he went, we never saw him after, and his wife soon died, and four or five years back my son died, and all that was left of the family was our pretty grand-daughter, Polly, who came to live along with my old woman and me, when she was a child. You should have seen her—she was the nicest little girl in the world, and had such pretty ways, you couldn't help loving her."

"And how did you lose her?" William inquired.

"The poor little girl went out for a walk, and we never saw her again."

"She was old enough, then, to be trusted out by herself?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure; she had been out hundreds of times before, and always came back at the time she promised. It was a hard thing, wasn't it, to lose such a dear creature, when there was no one besides in all the world that

cared for us, or that we cared for! I would have given every farthing we had in the world, and gone into the workhouse, to have seen her happy, and yet we have lost her. It is hard—very hard—for an old man like me, who is more than fourscore, to lose the last thing in the world that he loves, and then lie down and die, without anybody to say a kind word to him; but instead of that, to be cursed and beaten—oh dear! oh dear!—I wish I was dead!"

"But where is your good lady?" William asked, with moistening eyes—"does she know that you are here?"

"My old woman came up along with me," the old man replied; "but, poor creature, she was not so strong as I, and soon died after we got to London, and couldn't find Polly. It was a hard thing to part with her, for we had never been one day apart for fifty years; but I knew the good old woman was gone to heaven, where I hoped to see her soon. But Polly—I could not tell where she was, and my heart was breaking, while the old woman called out for her, and I couldn't tell where she was."

"And did you come to London to look for your grand-daughter?" William asked.

"To be sure I did," replied the old man; "what should I have come to London for, be-

sides that? We had never been here before, and never should have come; but how could we tay in the country where all our old friends were dead, and we had nobody to speak to, after Polly left us?"

"But how did you discover that your granddaughter was in London?"

"We did not know it, but we searched all the country round, and when we could not find her, we heard, that most likely she had come here, and then we sold off everything, and came up to look for her, as we had nothing besides to care for in all the world."

Just as the old man concluded this sentence, William heard a grating noise, which seemed to proceed from the roof; when recollecting the last words of the woman who had befriended him, he fancied that some person was endeavouring to open the door through which he had descended into the house. Whispering a word of caution in the ears of the old man, he stepped cautiously out of the room, and keeping within the black shadows beyond the range of the moonlight streaming through the windows, he contrived to reach the next floor below, before he could discern the stars shining through the opened door in the roof.

CHAPTER VI.

Persons in high life, such as lords, black-legs, members of parliament, and gentlemen of the turf—in short, all those persons who are generally called men of honour, will consider William Herbert a coward, and utterly unworthy the name of a gentleman, since many times in the course of his adventures he had received insults from rogues and fools, without demanding an opportunity of shooting them through the head, or being shot by them, which conduct, of course is utterly contrary to that which distinguishes the above-named men of honour. But it would be a mistake to suppose that he was utterly devoid of courage, and that he was a mere poltroon, because he did not display any alacrity to stand within twenty yards of the pistol of a trembling opponent; for it is just possible that he might

have faced danger with as unmoved a resolution, as the most famous of the campaigners in the fields of Wimbledon, who are generally famous for nothing besides.

The circumstances in which William Herbert was now placed, were calculated to test the steadiness of his nerves. As he stood at the bottom of the stairs, he beheld a ladder let down through the door-way in the roof, by means of which the ruffian whom he had formerly seen descended into the house. As he did so, a long blade in his hand glittered in the moonlight like a stream of fire, the handle of a pistol projected from each of his coat pockets, and a short piece of wood loaded at the end hung at one of his buttons. The man was perfectly visible to William, as he descended the ladder; and when the door overhead was closed, the ladder laid down, and William knew that he was shut up in such a place with a remorseless villain, it may be supposed that his situation was not the most comfortable in the world. Had he been armed, his circumstances could not have been greatly improved, since sickness had deprived him of so much of his natural strength. A loaded pistol might indeed have settled the affair; but William would not have put himself out of dan-

ger, by assaulting the man without giving him warning; and as he was in the house, without the ruffian's knowledge, to be a witness to deeds which rendered him liable to the highest punishment of the law, it was probable that any such warning would be a signal for his own immediate death. But how William might have behaved if he had been armed, it is not necessary to relate, since he knew not of a weapon, or an utensil that could be used as one, in the whole house.

Nor were there any means of escape now; since, as has been stated, the windows of the lower rooms were fastened, so that it would have been mere folly for him to attempt even to discover where they were situated, through the impenetrable darkness in which they were involved — he was compelled to remain in the house, and considering that all the motions of the ruffian were perfectly silent, so that he might at any moment come unperceived close to the very spot where William stood, and strike him down without warning, or that the piercing light of the dark lanthorn, which he undoubtedly carried, might be suddenly darted into any recess where he might station himself, it will not be doubted that his situation was calculated to cause some few tremors in the stoutest heart.

But William did not wish to escape from the house, or to hide himself from the ruffian—the instinct of self-preservation was absorbed by a sentiment of pity. He thought not of leaving the wretched old man in such remorseless hands, but determined to save him from harm, even at the hazard of his own life. With this intent, as soon as he heard the old man speaking to the ruffian, he stepped lightly up the stairs, and slipped into a corner of the kind of anteroom, which led into the old man's room, whence by the light of the moon and stars he could see what passed, and being within a few yards of the bed, could also hear the faintest whisper in the next room.

The ruffian was kneeling at the side of the bed, grasping the old man's shoulder with one hand, and holding the dagger or knife to his throat with the other. The first words William heard were—"Your money, or in it goes," said the ruffian in a hoarse whisper, which was distinctly audible throughout both rooms.

"I have no money," cried old Mr. Benson.

"D—n you, be silent!" said the ruffian in the same tone, and violently shaking the old man at the same time; "if I hear your voice again, you shall die that moment. I'll have your money, I say, and it's no use for you to

say as you've got none, for I watched you go to the bank three times, and a friend of mine followed you in once, and heard your business there; so don't think to humbug me. I know where your money is, and if you don't put me in the way to get hold of it, I'm d—d if you shan't die this night!"

"You may kill me, if you like to kill an old man like me," the poor man replied in a low voice; "but I shall not give up my money, for I saved it for Polly, and nobody shall have it, but Polly."

"Polly be d—d!" said the ruffian, fiercely; at the same time dragging the old man from the bed with such violence that he shrieked, "Oh, my arm—my arm!"

"Speak again, and in it goes!" continued the ruffian, pricking the old man's neck with the point of his weapon, though not so deeply as to do him a serious injury. "You know what you've got to trust to, so it's no use to turn nasty. You thought, I suppose, as I couldn't make out them d—d papers as I took out of your pocket; but my lawyer tells me as how they'll be worth a good deal more than their weight in gold, with a little help from you; and I'm d—d if I don't make you get it in my hands."

"Ha! ha! ha! I am glad you were deceived," shouted the old man, in childlike glee; "you thought you could get my money with those papers, and you couldn't, and Polly shall have it all."

"I'll tell you what it is," replied the ruffian, again shaking his prisoner very roughly; "I'll tell you what it is, my man: I want the money, and I'm d—d if I don't have it, too. Now, if you'll put me in the way of getting the other papers without risk, I'll bring my lawyer to do the business, and let you go; but if you wont, by G—d you shall die; for I expect the people as owns this house to come and look at it in a few hours, and you shall never get into their hands. Listen to me, you d—d old fool, and don't sit grinning there, or I'll strangle you. Will you!" he suddenly exclaimed, as the poor wretch was about to shriek from the pain caused by the fierce grasp of the ruffian on his neck. "Listen to this: It don't signify to me whether you live or die—you may do as you please. If I am obliged to stab you, or choke you, I shall easily lay hold of every farthing you've got; and so I could now, by running the risk of a tuck up, which I'm d—d if I do while I can get it by strangling you. Now you see what

you have got to trust to; so make no more words about it."

"You shall never have a farthing of mine," replied the old man, tossing his head with the kind of defiance with which a child refuses to give up a plaything, and which would have appeared ludicrous but for the circumstances of the old man; "and I can tell you," he continued, "that you had better let me go, or you will be severely punished; for I have got a friend who will take care of me, and promised that you should not beat me any more."

While the silly old man said this, William, as may be supposed, felt anything but comfortable, since he fully expected that the ruffian would make an immediate examination of his meaning, and probably search the house immediately after for this friend. But this did not happen. The man being certain that no person could enter the house by the doors without violence, of which he should be immediately cognizant, and not suspecting the possibility of any person having been conveyed through the roof without his knowledge, supposed that the old man referred to the woman who had given him food; and he replied, "You be d—d, and all the friends you'll ever get, unless you do

what I bid you. You must not be here to-morrow morning when the people comes to the house; and if I let you out without getting your money, the d—d thieves in Bow Street will soon get me in quod. I'm in a fix now, and there's only one way of putting me right. Give me your money, and I'll let you out, and defy all the beaks in England; refuse, and d—n you, I'll strangle you, and sell your body to the hospital, as I've done many a better fellow than you. I'm honest and straightforward, you see. I give you your choice. What do you say?"

"You sha'n't have any of my money," the old man replied, with another expression of childish earnestness; "I will save it all for Polly; and I can tell you, you will be punished if you hurt me, for my friend promised he would take care of me."

"We'll soon see about that," the ruffian fiercely replied. "I give you one more chance, and after that the devil himself shouldn't save you. Will you give me the money?"

"No, I tell you; it is all Polly's," the old man replied, too weak in his mind to comprehend fully the mischief that was intended him.

"Then lie down, and put out your hands," said the ruffian, flinging the old man back

violently on the bed. "Put out your hands, I say, you d—d old fool, and if you offer to open your mouth, I'll cut your throat."

The ruffian put his dagger between his teeth, and, placing one knee on the old man's chest, drew two pieces of large cord from his pocket, one of which he tightly fastened around the old man's wrists, fixing his hands in the position of supplication, and the other he fastened with a slip-knot around his neck, and, clenching his teeth, drew the knot close to the old man's flesh.

Throughout this scene William had hoped that something might happen to call away the ruffian, and save the old man from injury and himself from danger, for which hope he had delayed discovering himself as long as possible; but now, seeing the old man in the most imminent danger, he stepped hastily forwards to spring upon the ruffian, and put their fates on the issue of a struggle. The practised ear of the ruffian immediately detected the movement —he withdrew his hands from his prisoner instantly, and cast a wary glance into the next room, when, discovering nothing, he took his dark lanthorn, and directed with the utmost caution a narrow stream of brilliant light into every corner that could be reached from where

he was, but without discovering the cause of the sound, because William, as soon as he saw the old man at liberty, had crept behind the door, and prepared himself to spring suddenly on the villain, if he should persist in his search. His courage and strength were, apparently, about to be tested, since the man instantly sheathed his blade, took the lanthorn in his left hand, and a pistol on full cock in his right, and advanced to make an examination of the house. But before he reached the door, a low, yet distinct whistle, and the faint tread of a person, were audible over head, when the ruffian, muttering an imprecation on his own ears for having deceived him, and made him believe such an impossibility as that any person could have got into the house without his knowledge, slid back the shade over his candle, and stepping rapidly forward on the points of his toes, put the ladder against the door in the roof, and immediately disappeared.

CHAPTER VII.

WILLIAM HERBERT stayed quietly in his place of security until he heard a faint grating noise, like that of fastening the door on the outside, when, feeling himself to be again safe for at least a few minutes, he rushed into the room where the old man was lying. His mind, which had seemed to be recovering somewhat of its natural character under the influence of kindness and sympathy, was again the mere shattered and disjointed ruins of intellect.

"Dear me, young man, is it you? what are you at?—are you going to kill me?" he asked, as he felt William's hands in his neck, endeavouring to take off the cord; "and you are one of the wicked men, then! Well, I did not think so; but I am so foolish. I thought I

saw somebody else here;—but I forget every thing."

"I am come to liberate you, Mr. Benson," replied William; "be quiet a moment, and let me take these cords off."

"Well, now, I don't understand all this," the decrepit old man said to himself, with a puzzled air. "How came I here? What place is this? I thought somebody was choking me; and now you say you will liberate me. Why, this is not my bedroom, is it?"

William had freed his hands and neck from the cord while he was thus muttering, and then desired him to get up and follow him. But the old man was incapable of comprehending him, and lay back on the bed, saying to himself—"Well, this is strange!—to think of my being here in prison, with my hands tied, and forget what I have done! My head goes round. Young man, what year is it?

"Eighteen hundred and thirty-four."

"Well, I thought so. I forget everything; but I thought I was an old man of fourscore, for I was born in fifty-three. Do you know, I thought just now I was in my own little bedroom that looked out on the green fields, and fancied my poor old mother was just coming up to say—'John, my child, get up, and go to

school.' How well I remember her voice! and to think that I should be brought here, with my hands tied, and forget what it's for! But don't laugh at a poor old fellow of eighty and more, for I never harmed anybody that I recollect."

William was not disposed to laugh at the old man's imbecility; his own danger affected him less than the utter helplessness of the poor creature, who seemed to have no friend in the world who would raise a hand in his behalf.

"Come, come, Mr. Benson, cheer up!" said William, taking one of his hands; "you are not fastened in any way now; I have taken away the cords, so get up and follow me; we will leave the house together, and I will help you search for your granddaughter Polly."

"Polly! my dear Polly!" exclaimed the old man, suddenly recalled to a sense of his situation by the utterance of a name so dear. "Help me up, and we will go together. You are a good young man. Quick, quick!"

William assisted him on his feet; but no sooner did the old man put out his foot from the bed, than he fell back on it, and when William examined narrowly, he found that one foot was fastened by a chain to a staple in the floor. Without an implement to sever this strong fastening, he stood awhile, undecided how to

act; and when he endeavoured, by his own unassisted strength, to wrench the staple from the floor, he felt himself unable to accomplish it. While he was still struggling ineffectually, he felt a hand on his shoulder, and, starting back, beheld the woman who had originally brought him into the house.

"What are you at?" she whispered, when their eyes met; "are you mad as well as the old man?"

"No, I am not mad," he replied, notwithstanding her motions for silence. "I am not mad, but I soon may be if I continue to witness such scenes as are acted in this house. Why that horrible ruffian endeavoured to murder this poor old man, and it was only by the special interposition of Providence that he was called away before the crime was accomplished."

"And what business is it of yours?" the woman replied; "he did not attack you, and if you keep out of his way, as I tell you, he will not do you any harm. Follow me."

Thus saying, the woman left the room, and descended the stairs, followed by William, until they were on the ground floor, when she entered a room which was perfectly dark, and drawing a heavy bolt, the window shutters flew open on the inside, and a faint glimmer of light penetrated into the apartment. As William

approached the window, the woman slowly lifted up the sash, when the distant hum of city motion, and a wall facing and close to the window, informed him the opening was over a narrow passage, which led either from the house to some of the offices behind, or from the supposed public square into the kitchen.

"Now then, young man," said the woman, as soon as the sash was open, "if you value your life, spring out into the passage, and make the best of your way."

"And what is to become of the old man?"

"What is that to you? Mind your own business; the man is not a relation of yours, is he?"

"No; but a man in his danger becomes more interesting to me than any relationship could make him. I will not leave the house without him; or, if I am compelled to do that, I shall immediately call for the police, and force my way to his rescue."

"And cause me to be murdered. I don't understand you," said the woman, in a hesitating manner, and closing the window as she said it. "I have preserved you from starvation at the risk of my own life; and now, when I wish you to go away in safety, you refuse, and insist on doing what must end in my death, and probably in yours also."

"I have! Young man!

"And I do not understand you," William replied. "Is it possible that you do not comprehend that the misery and danger of this old man create a feeling of compassion in my heart, and that I feel it a sacred duty to endeavour to protect him?"

"I have saved you from starving," the woman replied, "and now that you are able to go and keep me out of danger, you turn round on me, and risk my life for things that don't at all concern you. But you had better make your escape while you can: for my master will be back in an hour, and if you are here your life will not be worth a farthing."

"I will go if you will let the old man go with me."

"And what's the old man to you! But I tell you, I don't care whether you go or not, for if you stay, or if you take the old man away, I shall be killed. And if you don't go at once, I shall tell him when he comes home, and take all chances."

"You have too much humanity to do what you say."

"I have no humanity."

"It was humane—it was kind, to do as you have done by me."

"Pshaw! young man, don't stand prating to

me; I took you up as I would a starving dog or cat, to give you a bit of victuals, and set you on again. And I would have turned you out again directly if you had been able to stand, and had not seemed anxious that I shouldn't be punished. You spoke of your mother also—and I once had one. But the cautions I have given you since were for my own sake, and not for yours."

"Well, whatever you may say, you have behaved like a Christian to me, and you must always be gratefully remembered by me; so far as I am concerned, you have done all in your power—I could not ask you to do more while you run so great a risk in defending me. But I must speak for this old man. You know his danger: the man would not hesitate to murder him; and can you stand by and see it done?"

"I shall do what Jack orders me."

"And suppose you were seized by the laws for these offences, what would become of you?"

"I don't care; and it's no business of yours."

"But my good woman—"

"Don't call me a good woman," interrupted the woman; "I am a bad woman."

"My friend, then, I pity a person in your condition, whose life is condemned by your own conscience. You are capable of doing good by instinct, yet do not tremble at habitual crimes

some very terrible combination of circumstances must have caused this contradiction, and whatever it be, I pity you as I would a mother or a sister suffering under the greatest misfortunes."

"Pity me, young man! Stop till you pick me up in the streets before you pity me."

"Yes!" William replied, "I understand your remark. Bodily destitution has made me an object of your pity; but the most terrible stage of famine is not so awful as that state of the heart which reverences neither the laws of man nor of God; and when it was in your power to help me, you were more thoroughly an object of pity than I was. I am a gentleman's son; I was educated for the church; misfortunes reduced me to the situation in which you found me—it put us on the same level, and it would be absurd for me now to pretend to the rank of a gentleman to you who have saved me from starvation. I speak not in that way—I speak out of respect to you—and I could go down on my knees to beg you to listen carefully to what I say. I speak not boastingly; but I can say that distress and even famine have not brought me so low that I fear to meet a person of virtue. I could resume my station in society without feeling that I had rendered myself unworthy of it, and I thank God more heartily that he has pro-

tected my honour and virtue, than I should if my fortune had been advanced at their expense. This I can say, I know the pleasure of a quiet conscience. Can you say the same? Bear with me—I esteem you and respect you, and I believe I shall give you the greatest proof of it, if I can prevail on you to consider again the situation in which you stand, and what may be its termination."

"I know how it will end," said the woman.

"How?" asked William.

The woman paused a moment or two, and then said, in a voice which she vainly endeavoured to make steady—"I shall die a violent death—I shall go on the streets—I shall die on the scaffold, or in the hospital, or be killed at home—I know it—I know it!"

"And what can make such a life at present endurable, when you know it will have such a terrible termination? It cannot be the sympathy you meet with. Your feelings are strong, and I should fancy your mind would revolt from tyranny; yet you suffer the ruffian with whom you live to beat you and use you like a slave. I cannot believe that persons so unsuitably yoked together can be happy, or that love, or any kind of affection, can sweeten a life which is not only subject, as yours must be oc-

casionally, to the miseries of want, but which is one continued scene of desperation and danger."

"Love and happiness!" cried the woman, vehemently; "it is long since I have known or heard of them. But nothing better is within my reach. The man I live with does beat me sometimes, and treat me cruelly, and will kill me at some time or other; but sometimes he speaks kindly, and sometimes trusts me, and there is nobody in the world will do it besides him. He is my only friend."

"You think too hardly of the world. Thousands there are who would gladly lead you in the path of virtue."

"And why should I want to be virtuous? What has virtue done for me?"

"Have you deserved the protection of virtue? In what manner have you treated the laws both of God and of man?"

"Cursed be all laws!" the woman replied, vehemently; "they have made me what I am."

"How can that be?"

"The laws! the laws!" replied the woman, fiercely; "it is easy for those to obey the laws who are protected by them. All the rich, all the powerful, may well obey the laws, and support them, since they profit by it. But what

have laws and virtue been to me, but a curse that can never wear away! My father—my father! You may think, young man, that I am a stone, if I shed no tear in telling my story; but though sometimes my eyes are hot and dry as a fire, often when I am by myself I throw myself on the floor, and cry from sunrise until sunset, unless I faint, or am forced away by the man that I live with. Hear what the laws have done to me, and then reproach me with disobeying them. My father worked in a stocking-frame, in a little town a few miles from Leicester, and was clever at his business. He was fond of reading and study; and when the monstrous oppression and tyranny of those worsted-lords forced the mechanics into an examination of their own rights, my father was looked up to by the poorer persons, as a man who knew more of law and politics than the generality of them. He was fond of attending meetings for talking over public affairs, and spoke his mind plainly. At length, for saying something which a constable or magistrate did not like, he was taken up and put in prison.

"We had always been very comfortable at home; but it may be supposed we had not saved any money, as my mother was a weakly creature, and frequently laid up. He knew well

while in prison that we must be very poor—he felt for us, and, with some others committed along with him, attempted to escape from prison, and take us to some part of the world out of danger. The attempt was discovered—a struggle took place—and by some mischance one of the gaolers received an injury, of which he died some time after. My father was considered the leader in the first offence, which was called treason; he was looked on as leader in the attempt to escape, and was therefore considered the principal cause of this man's death. As a matter of course, my father was tried for murder, and also, as a matter of course, was found guilty by a jury picked out of the class immediately above that to which my father belonged, and who were not only dependent on these very worsted lords, but selected by them for the trial. The judge was considered a very merciful man; for while he sentenced my father to death, he shed tears, and made such an affecting speech that half the people in Court, besides the lawyers, cried too. It was all very well—people said so—they were satisfied. But my mother and I did not weep at the judge's tenderness—to us it was worse than all harshness; it ruined us—it killed my mother—it will destroy me, body and soul. The judge drew so

many tears to accompany his own, that ever body thought my father must be a very bad ma since a judge who was so merciful felt himse compelled to hang him. Perhaps he did n know that every word he uttered carried th sympathy of his hearers away from my fathe perhaps he did not know that he was stabbi to the heart a wife and daughter, who had n deserved to be punished; but so it was—I an my mother were in Court, and I well recolle the horror gathering over the faces of all th people who had before seemed inclined to pi We were persons that could not change—n form of words could disguise from us the horri the man we most loved and honoured was to b strangled like a dog; a shameful rope was to b fastened about the neck which our arms had o often encircled with love; no, we could no change—my father could not become an obje of horror to us. We would have taken him t our bosoms from the hands of the executione we could have borne away even his disfigure remains with more care and resolution than th richest crown in the world, and have held th place sacred wherever they had been deposit —his body would have made the ground hol in our minds; for though the judge said, an the people believed, that he was not worthy t

live, he had always been very kind and good to us, and we loved him. Terrible—terrible was the time between the day of trial and the day of execution! I speak calmly, and without tears, of the shameful death of my father; I have thought on it too long—I have suffered too much from it to be moved by it now, unless it were possible for me to be revenged on all the authors of our ruin. That those days were spent in grief I need not say; I know what it is to watch by the bed of a dying parent—it is a sorrowful office to watch the gradual sinking away of the truest of friends; but to meet a parent day after day in full health, yet know that in a certain number of hours he must be taken from us, by a death, the misery of which we can never soften by tears; by a fate which will make us infamous—to meet in sorrow and shame, for which love cannot suggest an alleviation—the cries of a broken-hearted wife and child to be mingled with the rattling of a parent's chains — every wretched sob to be listened to by a stony-hearted gaoler, and then totter away to the desolate place which was once a home, and watch through night and day, and vainly endeavour to keep away that terrible hour which rushes forward with the speed of a thunderbolt. By what right did the law inflict

such misery as this on two innocent and helpless women—misery, perhaps, greater than he endured whom the law punished for an offence; for that short moment of death-agony was not to be put in comparison with the ruin of body and soul which it has inflicted on me! Our town was not many miles from the county-town, and you may be sure that young and old put on their Sunday clothes, and went to see so interesting a sight as the execution of an old acquaintance. The law had provided them with a fine holiday amusement; but had the law, or those that made it, seen me and my sick mother folded in each other's arms on the floor, crying with an eternal grief, and envying the speedy termination which his misery would find—had they seen us they would have cursed themselves as I curse them. Talk of virtue, and justice, and the dignity of the law!—they shew a fine outside to the world; but hideous would they appear if all were exhibited which is now forced into corners and darkness. It was a grand act of justice to exhibit to the world a man hanging by the neck; but was there any greatness or justice in making infamous and breaking the hearts of two inoffensive women? That sharp and sudden revenge of life for life was striking, and everybody saw its propriety; but only a few

knew that that act of justice had stricken the hearts of two unoffending women with a lingering disease which was never to be cured, however it might be hidden, and that it caused one of them to die heart-broken, and the other it rendered infamous!

"Friends had grown scarce as my father became in danger; but after he had been killed, we had no friends—all dropped off from communicating with the widow and child of a man who had been hanged. I was young, and had feelings then—I was not what I am now. A young man—the—the son of a little farmer—visited our house—visited my father—and I—I—he asked me to marry him, and I promised,—in short, I would have followed him barefoot all over the world—I would have laid down for him to trample me under foot, if he had asked me. But that is all over—he never came to our house any more—he was very respectable, and could not marry the daughter of a man who had been hanged. That was very bitter—I can shed tears now—more than I shed then. The insupportable weight of my grief stupified and maddened me; but I have felt since. All these things pressed my poor mother down—she died a few weeks after my father, and I was left alone in the world, without a

friend. Everybody avoided me — the more, perhaps, that I had been constant in attending my father; had I left him, like his friends, people might have been kinder to me; because I would not be torn from him, I was looked on as, in some measure, a partner in his guilt. Women, even the lowest of women, avoided the daughter of a murderer; and men dared not acknowledge me, unless it were those that would have made me deserving of the avoidance which everywhere I met. Nobody where I was known would employ me to work for them; I became desperately in want—I ran away to where I was not known. I applied for work of any kind—I could not be employed without a character, and those that took the trouble to inquire concerning me in my native town, were informed of my situation, and turned me out of their houses. I became a beggar, and at length found myself in London, the point to which an outcast always directs his steps. I was then innocent of all offence against every person in the world, and would have continued so, but that I was starving, and no good person would give me food, or a kind word. At length I met with persons who were not good—persons who defied the laws which had ruined me; these persons offered me kindness, and I gladly ac-

cepted it. No person in the world cared for my virtue, and why should I care for it? No virtuous person ever offered me protection, or even a crust of bread; and why should I wish to be like them? I have thrown in my lot with those who never asked me for a character, and I know that I shall die with them, or by them. And who can blame me if I hate the laws and the virtue which have thrust me out of society?"

This account of herself was given by the woman with great vehemence of manner, and extreme rapidity, as though she were giving vent to the accumulated emotions of years, which had been a burden and a destruction; and William Herbert was somewhat surprised at language so nearly correct coming from a woman of her situation, but imputed it to the fact that the subject on which she spoke had occupied her mind many years, so that what she said was probably more an effort of memory, than of unpremeditated speech. She stopped as abruptly as she had begun, when William seeing that she waited for an answer to the question with which she had concluded, said—

"My dear friend, you are very much to be pitied; but not more for your personal misfortunes than for the belief you have acquired that

you are justified in leading an evil life, and that because the weak prejudices of ignorant people have, as it were, driven you into guilt, that all virtuous people are the same."

"What means have I ever had of living a virtuous life?"

"Even now you might. Put yourself under some virtuous female——"

"Under whom?" said the woman, interrupting him. "What person is there in the world that cares what I am? What person would not turn their backs on me with loathing? You are the only person that ever spoke to me on the subject, or I should not have talked with you as I have done; will you put me in an honest way of life and support me in it?"

"I am poor, and have no friends," William replied, "or I should be most happy to do it."

"Then why talk to me of repentance and virtue, which are impossible! You would have me throw off the only person in the world who will give me a morsel of bread—and for what? —to become one of those good people, whose characters are so pure that they dare not patronise or notice a wretch who has been connected with a criminal who has been punished. But why do *you* talk to me of virtue and reform? If I had done you an injury, you might

wish to alter me; but you have starved amid the thousands of pure Christians which are in London, and you are rescued by me. Would you then make me like one of those that left you to starve? You have no right to wish me changed: I have protected you when the world deserted you. Put an end to this idle talk; go your way, and leave me to mine. I fight against the laws which have ruined me, and when they lay hold of me, I shall suffer without flinching."

As the woman said this, a neighbouring clock struck three, when she threw up the window again, and exclaimed—"Out, this minute—out, I say—he will be here immediately."

"I shall not go without the old man," William replied, steadily, when the woman hastily threw down the window, and darted upstairs at her utmost speed.

After waiting a minute or two, William cautiously drew back the shutters and looked out; there was no person to be seen, but he discovered that the lane or passage did lead into a square. He turned round and looked about the room, almost determined to spring out and call the police; but by the faint moonlight he discovered that this room had been occupied, and that a fender and fire-irons were yet on the

hearth. This discovery suggested a new plan of action; he seized the poker, and ran with a rapid and silent step to the old man. With his utmost vigour he applied the poker to the staple to which the chain was attached. It flew from the ground—the old man was free. Half-led, half-carried, he hurried down with his preserver; and, covered only with a blanket, slipped safely from the window into the passage. William followed, and standing both in the open square, knew that they were safe, and shouted with a confident voice for the police. A coach was brought, and in a very few minutes Mr. Benson was in the hands of a medical attendant, at a respectable inn.

CHAPTER VIII.

No sooner had William Herbert seen old Mr. Benson in the hands of persons qualified to take proper care of him, than he hastened back to the house whence he had brought him, resolved to protect the woman against the consequences which her humanity to him might have entailed indirectly on her. His courage was, however, spared the test of a struggle with the lawless ruffian whom he intended to dare; for on examining the passage by which he had entered the square, he failed to discover the window, since all the windows were fastened alike, and no trace was left, by which any person could have guessed at what had taken place there during the night. A board was fastened to the front of the house, directing those who wished to examine it to an agent in the neighbourhood; and Wil-

liam, as soon as he had performed the ablutions and other offices of the toilet, which, during the last week, he had so imperfectly performed—as soon as he had put himself in a state fit to make an appearance in public, called on the agent. He still failed, however, to discover a clue to the mysterious circumstances in which he had been involved. He went with the agent into every room of the house; but no vestige of inhabitants remained; everything had been removed, and no one, save an eye-witness, could have believed that within so short a time, the transactions just described had taken place in that house. They went on the roof, and walked a considerable distance; in fact, until they came to a street which William fancied was that over which he had passed on the ladder. He glanced over the parapet, and shuddered to think that he had ventured across the tremendous chasm by means of only a creaking plank and a ladder. He turned away and left the house, gathering from the agent's remarks, that it might have been taken possession of by the burglars entirely without the knowledge of the owner; and, considering the caution they observed in their movements, and the knowledge they possessed of the owner's intentions, it appeared that the same thing might be carried on again for a con-

siderable time without a probability of discovery. William did not disclose what had passed; he had not made up his mind, whether, under the circumstances, it would be quite honourable for him to become an informer; and, besides this, she hoped to be able first to discover the woman who had protected him, and prevail on her to separate her fate from that of the wretch who was bringing her to certain and eternal destruction.

But although William Herbert narrowly examined all the streets, lanes, and courts in the neighbourhood, he failed to discover the persons he was looking for; and, indeed, the search was not likely to be successful, since he recollected nothing that passed on that terrible evening when he fainted, from the time he entered the court until he awoke in the garret.

Meanwhile, old Mr. Benson, being constantly attended by a nurse and a surgeon, and provided with the comforts necessary to his age and situation, assumed a somewhat more human appearance. The long beard was taken off; his cheeks acquired a little more flesh; a good suit of clothes was put on him; and, at length, he seemed to be a respectable old gentleman, being, in that respect, a decided contrast to the squalid and unearthly-looking idiot which he at

first appeared to us. But neither the sympathy of William Herbert, nor the constant attentions of the nurse, could restore to the old man his original intellect. He did not now, to be sure, draw figures in the air, and call on his grand-daughter from morning till night — he even sometimes conversed with considerable steadiness, and with at least an average degree of power; but the terror and the want which he had undergone in the hands of the ruffian, had irreparably disturbed what old age had left of intellect, and his conversation was as unsettled and flighty as that of an infant. William very seldom left the room, because, in the first place, the old man was never so well pleased as when the young man was near him; and in the next, he had no other place to go to; and William, of course, humoured him in every way, since dispute would have been cruelty, and the old man's peculiarities and oddities were perfectly harmless. The second day after their escape from the hands of the ruffian, as they were sitting and talking, if not altogether conversing with each other, the old man suddenly cried—"Bring me pen, ink, and paper,—I want to write." William did as he had been desired; and the old man began to write; but he had hardly got to the end of one line when he put

his hand to his head, like a bewildered man, and after several efforts threw down his pen, saying—"Well, how strange to think I can't write!—bless me, what a memory I have!"

"Will you allow me to write for you?" William asked.

"No, no; that would never do," the old man replied. "If I were to tell you who I was writing to, you would laugh at me, and think me an old fool."

"I don't think I should," William replied, with great kindness of manner.

"No?—would you not?" said Mr. Benson. "Well, then, I'll tell you: I was going to write to my grandchild, Polly."

"And how would you send your letter to her?"

"Ah, I never thought of that!—but let me see—never mind, never mind!—I warrant she shall have it, so now take the pen and write. I dare say we shall manage very well."

William dipped his pen in the ink and waited for the old man's dictation.

"My dearest Polly—write that first," Mr. Benson began. "Don't think I am going to scold you for running away from your poor old grandfather; no, my dear child, you know I never scolded you, and I want to see you so badly

once more after you have been so long away, that, upon my word, I should be glad to die that minute. My dear little Polly, you can't think how sorry I was when you didn't come back again. I looked for you all over the country; and when I was obliged to tell your grandmother that you couldn't be found, she drooped directly, and seemed to grow many years older in a minute; and then she died; for you know how fond she was of you—poor old creature! we were never parted for fifty years. And now, here I am, an old man of fourscore, come up to London to look for you; for you see old folks like me have outlived all their old friends, and can't take to any new ones besides their own flesh and blood, and you see I couldn't rest after losing you, the only relation I had in the world. Read that over," said Mr. Benson to William; and when it had been done, he continued, while the tears ran down his cheeks unheeded, "Yes, my dear Polly, when a man's old friends have dropped from around him, and he's got to fourscore, he may be sure that he will soon drop off too. But that I may not be taken unawares, and leave you to fight your way through the world by yourself, I write to tell you of what may be of some assistance to you, if not now. I have saved up some money in business,

Polly; but it is of no use to me now. I began business for my own children, and when they died, you know, I kept on my trade for you, who was as dear to me as my own; and now you are gone the money is of no use to me. I wish I was in the workhouse, Polly, so that you had the money and were happy; and you may have it when you like as I am going to put it in the bank in your name—that is, all but a few pounds just to keep me the little time that an old man like me has to live. Read that over," said the old man; and when William had done so, he said—"that will do very well—'tis all true—write on." William again took his pen, and the old man said, "Where are you, my Polly, and why did you leave your old grandfather? Do you know, people say that you are not a good girl, and that you ran away from us, of your own accord, to lead a wicked life. But I never believed them, and they never would have believed it if they had loved you as I did, and known what a dear, good girl you were. I am sure you would never have left us unless you had been compelled to. But my dear Polly, if you did run away from us willingly, we must have been cross to you, or offended you in some way, though I can't recollect it. I don't remember that we ever gave

you an angry word. But if you were offended at anything, Polly, do forget and forgive, and come back again, and your old grandfather will go down on his knees to you for forgiveness, and you shall do whatever you please, and nobody shall ever interfere with you again. For who can be so natural to you as your grandfather? If you have other friends that I don't know, they may take offence at little things, or get other friends, and so forsake you; but your grandfather will never be offended, he can never get any friend in your place, and rather than forsake you, would follow you barefoot to the end of the world. Oh, Polly, my dear child! I do really love you, and my heart is like to burst when I think on the danger in which a little girl like you must be in a strange place, without a friend that you can depend on to take care of you. Oh, Polly!—what will become of you? If you should become wicked, it would be a terrible thing for me—and for you. You would not be parted from me for ever, Polly, would you?—in the next world as well as in this? Oh, my dear Polly, I shall soon die! and if your father should ask me in heaven about his child, what could I tell him?"

As the old man uttered these words, he burst into tears, and fell back in the bed overpowered

by the images which his desolation and his bereaved affection had conjured up. William advanced to assist him, his own face not unstained by tears, and in a few seconds recalled the old man to his senses. As soon as this was effected, Mr. Benson inquired for the letter, when William endeavoured to turn his thoughts in another direction, for supposing that the desire to write was merely one of the ebullitions of childishness, he had put the letter aside to be destroyed. But the old man's heart was stronger than his mind—that never swerved from the influence of circumstances; he would have the letter, and William was obliged to fold and seal it and give it him; when with a look of childish intelligence he laid it under his pillow, saying, he did not doubt that he should soon send it.

But one conclusion of some importance William drew from this letter, as well as from his own observations, which was, that an interview with a lawyer would be of service to the old man. When, however, he mentioned it, it was refused, the old man seeming quite convinced that he was able to manage his own property. He then spoke to the physician on the subject, and explained to him, that his patient possessed considerable property which might be lost, since he had been robbed of documents

which were probably securities for it. The physician approved of his suggestion, and by dint of a little management, gained from the imbecile old man a knowledge of the place where he had formerly lived, when he wrote to the clergyman of the parish a statement of the particulars, and requested his personal attendance. On the next day, the reverend gentleman made his appearance, when, as the physician was not in the house, William introtroduced him into the bedroom, and was pleased to see that there was a mutual recognition between the parties. Having some doubt as to his right to listen to the conversation, he left the room, and went to communicate the clergyman's arrival to the physician.

On his return to the inn, the clergyman informed him that Mr. Benson had been robbed of a great number of documents, probably of great use to himself, though of little to the robbers, unless they dared to forge Mr. Benson's signature, and were prepared to fly the country as soon as they had succeeded in obtaining the money. Of this there was some probability, as the old man was not sufficiently collected to be able to state the exact nature of the documents, and therefore notice could not be given. The clergyman suggested in very earnest terms that a solicitor

should be applied to immediately, and as he was about as well acquainted with the world as Mr. Benson himself, he wished to send for Lawyer Sixayt, an attorney in the little town of which he was pastor. But William, although he must have been aware that a country attorney is quite as great a rogue as a London one, yet knew enough of the world to be certain that there was a considerable difference between the pettifogging rogue of the country, and the adventurous rascal of the metropolis, and that one clever town lawyer would do more with a set of London thieves, than all the quibbling villains that ever enriched themselves by stirring up ill-blood among country shop-keepers. Besides this, although William might have derived considerable pecuniary advantages from prosecuting his acquaintance with Mr. Benson in a certain manner; in his intercourse with him no thought of pecuniary advantage ever entered his brain—self-interest was absorbed by a powerful feeling of humanity; but when he found that the presence of a lawyer was necessary, perhaps a few images of hope arose before his mind, when he thought of Mr. Burgess. Perhaps there was not much ground for hope in the tenderness of Mr. Burgess, judging from the severity and methodical caution of his

former behaviour; yet William fancied that the crabbed lawyer had seemed only to have pushed rather too far what was really a good principle; and the openness with which he had admitted what he had done, made William believe that there was a foundation of honesty in the old lawyer's composition, and that not only would he be qualified to act for Mr. Benson, but that he might give some useful advice to himself. Having stated to the clergyman, therefore, his reasons for considering that a London solicitor would be best able to manage the business, the reverend gentleman at once requested that he would procure one, and William accordingly went to Mr. Burgess's house in Berkley-street, whence he was directed to the office in the Temple. This he at length found, after puzzling through the series of courts, examining the tablets of names at half a hundred uniform doors, and worked his way up to a door labelled Mr. Burgess. He tapped at the door, and a minute after stood once more in the presence of the economical lawyer.

"Ho, ho, my young draper!" said he, as soon as he recognised his visitor, "what's the matter, eh? Never buy bargains here—sell some dearish ones sometimes, you think, don't you?"

"I beg your pardon," William replied; "I

am not a draper now. I am come for your professional assistance."

"What's the matter?—quarrelled with Wiggins?—bad things to bring actions against masters—juries are always with masters."

"It is nothing of that kind."

"Well, well, let's have it then."

William related the circumstances in which he had become acquainted with Mr. Benson, with what had occurred since, when Mr. Burgess requested to know how he came to be in such distress, and William informed him of all that had happened since they had met.

"Bless my soul!" said the old lawyer; "why, I declare you are quite a Don Quixote for adventures; but don't you recollect I told you I should be glad to see you again? Why did you not call on me? I could have made a clerk of you, and that would be better than starving in the streets."

"I did call, sir, but you were not at home."

"Oh, that was while I was in Yorkshire! Yes, I see. And what are you going to do now?"

"I don't know."

"Well, but why did you leave the Wellington House?"

"There were some things of an unpleasant nature."

"No secret, I hope."

"I have no wish, on my own account, to keep them secret, but I do not feel at liberty to mention them."

"Well, now, I will just step up, and have a bit of talk with Mr. Wiggins; and if I find what he says satisfactory, I can provide you with plenty of writing, on the condition that you commence at once, as we are at present in want of a junior clerk."

As Mr. Burgess said this, a gentleman in rusty black walked in, and was introduced as Mr. Trapper, the senior clerk, when Mr. Burgess and William left the office together, to attend to Mr. Benson.

I might here fill twenty pages by describing the transactions, and relating the conversation which passed between the poor old man, the lawyer, the clergyman, and the physician; and many readers may consider it a great omission that I do not, since Mr. Benson might be considered now to have fallen into worse hands than ever,—and, in fact, in such hands as very few people ever escaped without harm. But I put aside the tempting opportunity. I have

confined myself for some time principally to William Herbert; and as he knew not what passed between the parties, since he at once accepted Mr. Burgess's offer, and became a lawyer's clerk to save himself from starving, I do not see that I need give the reader a more extensive knowledge than he had. All that is necessary to the relation is to state that after two or three interviews with the old man, Mr. Burgess professed himself master of the case, and recommended his client to be removed to his native place. This was agreed to, and the old man went along with the clergyman, after bidding farewell to William, and making him a present of fifty pounds, which he would not have accepted if he had not been pressed to do so by all the parties, and by the thought that he could make a very good use of it. After an affectionate parting with the old man, William sent the fifty pounds to his mother, and sat down with raptures to his desk. It was a delightful thing to assist the dear beings at home! While he thought of *that*, the situation which had formerly appeared to be the lowest pitch of human degradation, he felt to be a special blessing of Providence; he actually thanked Heaven that it had made him—a lawyer's clerk.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

In the course of my long and laborious studies in those articles of human industry which distinguish the nineteenth century from all preceding ones—I mean novels and romances—I have been very much puzzled, in almost every work, to account for one thing which I am sure will very much amaze the antiquaries of future ages, if they happen to get hold of any of these productions, peculiar to our time; and as a hint may induce some of the nine-volumes-a-year men to explain their meaning in the point alluded to, I request the attention of all living manufacturers of novels and romances. As I have confessed that the thing has puzzled me, I must be excused for a rather circuitous way of saying what I mean; for a man is never so apt to be verbose as when he does not com-

prehend the subject on which he writes or speaks. If I take up a volume of sermons, an essay on morals, or a treatise on political economy (which I confess is not very frequently the case), the history of great men, or the biography of little ones, I generally find the author endeavouring to put into the book whatever he happens to know or can steal, on the subject in hand, without reference to me, or to any other person in the world who might chance to read it. The chapter prefatory may be apologetical, but the body of the work contains no appeal directly addressed to me, who am reading it.

But when I take up a novel or romance, the reverse of this is the fact. I hardly pitch on a page before I come to a remark addressed to me personally, as "the reader;" which formality seems to me somewhat unnecessary, since as the reader I should peruse the passage, as well as the rest of the book, without this personal notice of the author. But what puzzles me is, that whenever the reader is addressed, it is with an epithet significant of respect or esteem. "The enlightened reader," "the tender reader," "the learned reader," "the patient reader," "the generous reader," are some of the commonest modes of address; while I do not remember a single instance of an opposite cha-

racter, such as "the stupid reader," "the disgusted reader," "the brutal reader," or "the wearied reader," which one would think stood at least an equal chance of being applicable. Now there are two modes by which this circumstance might be accounted for, one of which is, probably, the true one; though I am perfectly unable to judge between them — the author certainly endeavours to flatter either the reader or himself. Yet, on further consideration of all the reasons on both sides, I rather incline to the former, on account of the apparent difficulties which lie in the way of the other. A man may write improbable narratives of unnatural characters, while he pretends to give a correct picture of human nature; but, surely, when he describes princes, lords, and honourables, by the visitants of his own little back parlour, he cannot believe that he is appealing to a "distinguished reader;" when he borrows a bit of classical knowledge out of Lempriere, or Potter, he does not really believe that he is addressing the "learned reader;" when Sir Adolphus, a youth of seventeen, soaks the grass with his tears, and makes the heavens noisy with his groans, at leaving the fair Angelica of fifteen or twenty-four hours, he cannot think that the tender reader will sympathize with him;

when, without having journeyed ten miles in a straight line in his life, he describes a foreign country, he cannot suppose that he is addressing himself to any "travelled reader." No, even the modern novelist cannot be so ignorant as to deceive himself in this respect; and suppose that his work could ever get into the hands of persons such as he addresses, to say nothing of the further improbability that they should read it; for of all the epithets which I have culled from the five hundred novels published within the last two years, the only one I can acknowledge to be true is one very seldom used—"the patient reader." There is no flattery in this; the person who can read those works must indeed be a very "patient reader." The novelist, then, uses these engaging terms to flatter the reader into good humour with himself, which will certainly be reflected back on the author. But if, in the vast majority of instructive works, a reader is never mentioned in sermons and pious books, such as the Tract Society's publications, he is generally styled a "sinner," a "child of the devil," or a "heir of perdition;" and the first words that meet his eyes are, "you are going to hell;" "you will be d—d," or some such unpleasant admonition, not very well calculated to make a plain man pa

severe in perusal: but in novels all is so smooth, so pleasant, and so courtly, that a man will persevere, and contrive to get through a book which, if he were to give an honest opinion, he would confess had in fact very little or no merit.

It is a trick of the novelist to get a reader through his book; and every page of the world's history shews that there is no engine more powerful in effecting that, or any other selfish purpose, than flattery.

When the man who never gave away a shilling in his life finds an address to the "generous reader;" or one who would imprison everybody who differs from him in a speculative opinion, an address to the "charitable reader;" or one whose days are spent at the ledger, an address to the "romantic reader;" or one who never heard of "*Tityre tu patulæ*, an address to the "learned reader;" or one who has suffered his child to die in a workhouse for marrying the person he did not select, an address to the "paternal reader;" or one who takes no more than his three bottles a day, an address to the "temperate reader;" or one whose great-grandfather, by the mother's side, was tenth in succession to the illegitimate son of an Irish lord, an address to the "aristocratic reader;" or one who gave

his vote under the order of his landlord to a person he had never before heard of, an address to the "independent reader;" or one who had shot the man whose wife he had previously seduced, an address to the "honourable reader;" or one who had kept up the price of bread to fatten a dozen landlords and starve a thousand labourers, an address to the "patriotic reader;" or one who defames the private character of his sovereign for endeavouring to assist the poor starving wretch, instead of the fat landlord whom fortune has amply protected, an appeal to the "loyal reader;"—each of these persons takes to his heart the complimentary term, in spite of the secret consciousness of his own nature, which informs him he does not deserve it; the novelty of the compliment pleases him, and he reads on patiently to the end through the silliest book, declaring that the author is really a very sensible kind of fellow, that knows what's what.

Now, my dear reader (for dear you are to me since I calculate that you will not read my book without having paid for the pleasure directly or indirectly), if you happen to have acquired a taste for these sweet compliments by a long perusal of novels, I trust you will not throw my book aside, because I do not gratify your self-love. I wish it to be perfectly original, and

therefore am determined to speak the truth; which I could not do if I called you an "intelligent reader," while you might in reality be very stupid; or a "romantic reader," while you might be a plodding money-getter; or a "high-born reader," while you might not know whether you ever had a grandfather. If you will only judge of me by the plain straightforward narrative of real life which I place before you, and recommend me to your friends (as quack-doctors say in their advertisements), I shall be fully satisfied.

CHAPTER II.

When we were last in the cottage of the Herberts, Fanny had returned, thoroughly disappointed, from her first essay as governess in Mrs. Sharper's family. Her return was the subject of pleasure to her mother, who dreaded, for a child so timid and ignorant of the world, the dangers and the cruelties which would be so likely to give her pain, and even to injure her health. But Fanny was not long content to be at home. While the original cause of her leaving home existed, it necessarily followed that she would persist in prosecuting her object. She wrote to her brother requesting him to look out for a situation for her; and after some little delay, and a few fruitless applications, he succeeded through Mr. Burgess, in whose office he was now employed. This situation was in the

family of a Mr. Barton, a respectable client, who resided at Brentham Hall, in Essex, about a dozen miles from London. Mr. Barton was a man very well known and much respected on 'Change, being a stock-broker, supposed to be worth somewhere about half a million. His personal qualities, however, were not of such a nature as to induce me to give a long description of them. I may just observe, that not being of a very high or ancient family, but the artificer of his own fortune, he followed the good old custom of upstart rich men, by purchasing a matrimonial connexion with a family whose pure blood had not been vitiated by the luxuries of the world in the last half-a-dozen centuries. In other words, at the mature age of fifty, he took to wife the Honourable Constantia Mac Haggis, the ninth and youngest daughter of Lord Lackcash, a distinguished nobleman in the north of Scotland, the owner of a title somewhat older than the Conquest, and an estate of ten thousand acres, a great deal older still; the first of which produced an intolerable quantity of pride, and the other a never-failing supply of heath and rocks. By this marriage, Mr. Barton probably secured to himself a partner who would remind him daily of her condescension in marrying him, and certainly a constant draining of

his purse to fill the bellies of a hundred or two of brothers and cousins in the neighbourhood of John of Groats.

But Mrs. Barton was not by any means a bad or disagreeable woman. She set, perhaps, rather too high a value on her descent, too frequently alluded to the grandeur of her former home, and was affectedly delicate in everything relating to her personal comfort and elegance; but faults like these are not very black in a character, if indeed they can be called faults, in a young and pretty woman. Mrs. Barton was young and pretty, and though idle, and fond of gaiety, was not, on the whole, a bad mistress to Brentham. She was its mistress in a somewhat more extended sense than as the wife of its master, since she spent the whole of her time there, while Mr. Barton spent the greater part of his, where his heart and soul always were, in a little office within a hundred yards of the Bank of England.

The interior arrangements of the establishment were a very pleasant contrast to Fanny's experience, so far as related to her own situation. She was not received by Mrs. Barton as a slave, but was welcomed as a lady. She was not thrust into the school-room, and made to consider it her prison, nor was she compelled to sleep with the

children; certain hours were set apart for tuition, when of course it was her duty to be with her pupils, after which they were in the charge of their servant; and a pleasant bed-chamber, with a dressing-room, which would do very well for a sitting-room, were appointed for her own special use. So far as her own comfort was concerned, Fanny found her situation in a family of unquestioned gentility, preferable to that in one of unquestionable vulgarity; but that was not the consideration of greatest importance. She cared but little about her own comforts, in comparison with the furtherance of her original object—to serve her mother; to do which it was necessary to please her employer, and make her situation permanent, or perhaps a means of obtaining one more profitable.

Even in this Fanny was not much disappointed. Mrs. Barton did not complain, did not hint faults, did not even suggest improvements, and this pleased her very much the first week. But this fortunate circumstance was not without a drawback. Mrs. Barton's attention to the affairs of the nursery and the school-room, proved to be so subordinate to the amusements of the drawing-room, the evening party, novels, and driving, that her indifference was almost as bad as Mrs. Sharper's meddling and rude inquisitiveness.

It seemed a hopeless task to labour for one who neither blamed nor praised; in her indifference, Fanny found no grounds for her ambition, as it was not probable that she would interest herself for one, whose good or ill behaviour seemed a matter of such utter indifference.

Allusion has been made to the comforts of Fanny's situation, the hours which were at her own disposal, the room where she might study as she chose, to prepare herself for a more profitable situation, and other unusual conveniences for a governess; but "all is not gold that glisters," "it is possible to kill with kindness," and a thousand other proverbs assert, what nobody denies, that it is not always a fair appearance can be taken as proof of a thing intrinsically excellent. It was undoubtedly very pleasant, instead of being compelled to associate with the children all the hours of the day, to be confined only from nine till four; instead of being stewed up day and night in a close school, to have a pleasant sitting-room to retire to; and instead of superintending the meals, and measuring the appetites of half a dozen unruly boys and girls, to sit down, as any other lady, with ladies and gentlemen. Yes, all this was exceedingly pleasant as a theory; but in two or three weeks after Fanny's first appear-

ance at Brentham, she was somewhat surprised to find that she had some difficulty to put it all in practice. Not that Mrs. Barton, or any one of the family was unkind, or encroached on the terms originally agreed on—not that the children, two pretty young girls, required more care than was at first supposed necessary; by no means. Everything was perfectly fair; the original agreement was maintained inviolably. But it happened that Mrs. Barton knew somewhat of Miss Herbert's history, and being attached to family distinction, she seized every opportunity of obliging her, which she did in a way that would most have pleased herself, if it was not the most suitable to Miss Herbert's circumstances and prospects. The very day after Fanny arrived at Brentham, Mrs. Barton walked into the school-room at noon, to invite Fanny to a drive; and she, taking the invitation as a command, at once got ready; and returned from the jaunt just in time for dinner at five. Mrs. Barton was pleased with her young governess on account of her birth, her prettiness, and her humility. She had been used to crabbed, pedantic, and dowdy governesses; and the present change was so gratifying, that she was disposed to make her more of a companion than a servant; so that in the first week nearly

half of the school hours were devoted to driving into the neighbouring villages, and to the shops in London. Sometimes, also, Mrs. Barton took Fanny with her in her evening visits, which extended pretty far into the night; and, perhaps, into the morning.—It must be such a gratification to her to mix in society, such as she had been used to in former times. Besides, Mrs. Barton happened to discover that Fanny had a pretty taste in millinery, as well as a delicate and rapid finger with her needle; which, as she gave and attended many parties, was a very pleasing discovery—not that she would think of expecting Miss Herbert to perform the offices of her own maids, but, as school closed at four, of course Miss Herbert would not have time to dress for dinner; while, if she would be so good as just to look at her head a bit along with Victorine, it would very much oblige her, as Miss Herbert's taste was really so good; and she could dress afterwards, and be ready to take her place at the piano in the drawing-room. Nay, sometimes poor Victorine was so very much fatigued, that Fanny was asked whether she had any objection to wait up for Mrs. Barton; she was to make everything as pleasant to herself as possible—there were the books, and the harp, and the piano, in the drawing-room; she could

find plenty of amusement with her nice tastes, and Mrs. Barton really would not be late.

When Mrs. Barton was *at home*, Fanny, of course, sat at the piano as long as any persons could be persuaded to dance, or while any one wished to hear, and perhaps a little longer. Sometimes too, and pretty generally, if Fanny had a leisure hour, and wished to sit in her room, or to walk, the children, who loved her better than their servant, if not than their mother, would contrive to join her; and though they were nice children, the care and attention necessary with them, were sufficient to prevent the time from passing as leisure, or relaxation from her ordinary duties. But to all this Fanny submitted willingly and cheerfully: those offices seemed to belong to her situation; and though they effectually prevented the cultivation of her mind, though they entirely subdued all her ambitious hopes, and were even contrary to her ideas of personal comfort, she did not complain. She was not in want. Her mother's small income was not now spent on her; and that consideration would have made her bear patiently a thousand real miseries. But the worst of all this was, that Fanny had principles. Looking on all these extra employments, if not as relaxation and amusement, yet as things foreign to

the duties for which she was engaged, and which she was to prosecute for a livelihood, she made up to the children every hour thus spent; and, either by rising an hour or two earlier in the morning, or devoting to them the hours of evening, she contrived that their improvement should not be neglected. This not only deprived her of every chance of improving herself, but involved a want of rest injurious to her health. But another circumstance which may appear somewhat below the dignity of history, threatened to add her to the numerous victims of her interesting profession. At home she had been accustomed to very regular hours. If she worked well, she could always cease at a certain time; if her bed was not quite so soft as at Brentham, she went to it early, and slept well; if her food was plain, she partook of it when she was hungry, and relished it. At Brentham the reverse was the case. She worked without knowing when to end; she sat up so late, that in bed she rather dreamed than slept; and she ate almost nothing. Fanny was up between six and seven, and took breakfast before she went into the school; but Mrs. Barton generally arose about noon, and breakfasted in her dressing-room. Whether she took any refreshment between breakfast and dinner, I know not; but

cretainly there was no formal meal prepared. She probably did not think of her governess. Fanny, perhaps, might have had what she wished if she had asked for it; but she was a modest timid creature, and did not like to mention her wants to Mrs. Barton, or go to the kitchen for food; and often, during the day, she suffered the pangs of hunger, which by the usual time of dinner had passed away, leaving her sick and without appetite; and when she went to bed, faint and giddy, she could not but feel, that her constitution was daily attacked, in a way which must eventually produce very serious consequences.

Fanny was not the first nor the last person in her circumstances, who, from want of a little worldly courage in herself and a little consideration in her protectors, was in danger, in the midst of plenty and affluence, of suffering those lowest miseries, supposed to be peculiar to the hovels of the poor.

CHAPTER III.

But before the circumstances mentioned in the last chapter had time to produce fatal consequences to Miss Herbert, an event occurred which, I trust, will be rather more interesting than the very common occurrence of a poor governess perishing from labour, watching, and want.

Fanny had been at Brentham about a month, when one day Mr. Barton informed his lady that the next day a party of gentlemen would accompany him from town to dinner, consisting of Mr. Smith, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Jenkins, &c.—connexions of very great mercantile houses in the city, with which he did a great deal of business. This information was given to Mrs. Barton, that there might be a certainty of a sumptuous dinner, which Mr. Barton prided

himself on, and was conveyed to Fanny, because, on those occasions, she had to appear either at dinner, or after dinner, in the drawing-room.

At five the next afternoon the gentlemen drove up to the door, and in due time ate their dinner, but without the assistance of Fanny, who was, as usual, engaged in superintending or assisting Victorine, instead of dressing herself, her introduction to the gentlemen being at the tea-table. I shall be expected, of course, to describe her emotions at discovering her former pupil in this Mr. Wilson, and the start which his presence occasioned; but, alas! I have nothing of the kind to describe, from the simple reason that she did not at first recognise him. This may appear strange; but the fact was, that the name Wilson was not so very uncommon as to prepare her to expect, in any one bearing that name; the former ploughboy, especially in a circle so unlike that in which she had been used to meet him. Besides, she had seen him only once before in anything like a decent suit of clothes, and two years had made too great an alteration in his person for her at once to single him out from the other gentlemen present, or to distinguish him from the great number she was in the habit of meeting. But

even when they were introduced to each other, Fanny did not recognise her old acquaintance, until Mr. Wilson, with a glowing face, muttered that he had the honour of knowing Miss Herbert. But still, alas! for her romance, there was no embarrassment in her manner: she had not been thrown into such a relationship with him as to erase the impression formerly received; she could not wholly make up her mind that he was no longer a clown; she merely said formally she was glad to see him, and—and—they sat down to tea.

My good reader, if happening not to belong to these wealthy ranks, you therefore form very high opinions respecting them, and fancy that our friend Tom Wilson, who, not two years back, was a ploughboy, must be so unfit to join in the conversation of these distinguished persons without subjecting his ignorance to an immediate and awful reproof, you know but little of the effect of a good coat and a reputation for wealth. Mr. Wilson was a well-dressed and very good-looking young man—modest, but not bashful; not over-fond of hearing his own voice, though not afraid to speak when he had anything to say; and short as had been his acquaintance with the manners of civilized life, it would have required much sharper observers

than one commonly meets with to discover that he was not "to the manner born." Any one pre-acquainted with his history would have occasionally detected, in the tones of his voice, and the turns of his phrases, a slight mark of provincialism; but it was so slight as not to be noticeable in common society, especially as he was not a great speaker. This very quietness, perhaps, would have distinguished him from the majority of the young men of our time, whose tongues are almost as full as their heads are empty. Wilson would have made a greater impression on a lady in her solitary bower than on a party of gay gentlemen after dinner—on a man of the old school, who liked the concussion of opinions on reasonable subjects, than on a man of fashion, who would judge of a man's taste and ability by his conversation on the last new dancer, racer, or courtesan;—in short, though he was not wanting in spirit or gaiety, he was the very reverse of what is meant by a rattler.

Never had Wilson been less disposed for rattle or brilliancy than on this evening. Though the very farthest from indulging in fanciful sentimentalism or mental cant, he could not be insensible to the novelty of his position, so utterly different from that of former times.

Within the last two years, he had probably met many ladies of as dignified a character as Miss Herbert; he had certainly met many in a more elevated situation — many whose manners assumed a stronger claim to deference and respect; but in all those cases he had been thrown, without prejudice, into the society of ladies, whose merits or claim to respect he could fairly examine. With Miss Herbert the case was altogether different. During the two years since he had left his native village, and had last seen her, his remembrance of her, preserved by a daily conviction of the benefits he had derived from the family, was not reduced from its elevated and reverential character by witnessing the shifts which poverty had made her practise, or the personal humiliations she had endured, or even by what an indifferent world might have said of her situation in life. She was in his mind precisely what she formerly had been, a lady—a great lady—patronising and instructing him, an ignorant ploughboy; and whatever had been her situation now, had it been a thousand times lower than it was—had he met her a beggar in the street, despised and insulted by a rabble, he would have beheld in her a person he was compelled to respect, to reverence, to worship.

Although Fanny met Wilson without emotion, it was impossible to see him without thinking of her mother, and the old woman, and the days of old. The working of her heart and memory soon created feeling. They had not been many minutes together, before Wilson mentioned a letter which he had received from Mrs. Herbert that morning, and this naturally led to her seizing the first opportunity for gaining a little private information. She was no sooner seated at the piano, with Wilson prepared to turn the leaves for her, than she questioned him about her mother, and all affairs of the cottage at Burnside; and when that subject was once commenced, Wilson became more interesting to her than all the rest of the room. The subject was renewed at every cessation of the music—at every moment when they were near each other. It was the pleasantest evening she had ever spent at Brentham; the pleasure of home shone into her heart through Wilson—she was sorry when they separated, and looked forward to another meeting as a very great pleasure.

But what did Wilson think and feel after he had left Brentham!—after spending an evening with the daughter so beautiful, so reverenced, of Squire Herbert!—and spending it too in a

society where he could not but feel he was treated as somewhat more than her equal! His feelings were not all pleasure. Such an evening was worth a year of life; it had raised his estimate of his own position infinitely higher than fortune or even rank could have effected, as it made him feel that he was actually as high as the imagination of his former ignorance had placed the Herberts. But had not Miss Herbert rather been reduced to his own level? He did not pity her—he could not pity her; the very profoundity of his respect endowed every member of the family with such great and excellent qualities, and raised them so far beyond every station to which he could rise, that the lowest point of want or subjection to which they could have fallen, would not have lessened his sense of his own inferiority, even while he might be labouring to rescue them. No; he could not pity one of the Herberts—their moral qualities, and the familiar associations of his mind, carried them beyond the range of every feeling that could arise out of a sense of his own prosperity, saving the feeling of duty to devote himself to their service. His fortune, whatever it might be, was theirs; they had acquired it like any other property—they had acquired it through him, by giving him the ability

to obtain it. The situation of Miss Herbert was not, in his eyes, one of positive distress. Even if her cheek was somewhat blanched, and her eye rather dimmed by confinement, late watching, and want of exercise, many millions of men and women, famishing amid incessant labour, would have considered such a situation as embracing the utmost imaginable happiness, —but those millions were not Herberts. Wilson could not but observe, greatly as he reverenced Miss Herbert, occasional marks of subjection. Mrs. Barton spoke kindly and pleasantly to her —but who could do otherwise?—yet there was necessarily a tone, a manner in her language, whether intended or not, which implied that her requests were commands. Whether she asked her to play, or to attend to the children; in fact, in whatever she said, she appeared a mistress, and Miss Herbert a servant, whose will was not to be consulted, but whose obedience was a matter of course. Wilson could not but feel the difference between his own treatment and Miss Herbert's; and it seemed a contradiction of a painful and disgusting nature, that he should be treated with familiar politeness in the presence of Miss Herbert by persons who treated her as an inferior.

When he reached his home, in Consol Place,

Islington, he did not go to bed, although it was very late. He stirred up the fire in his little parlour, and sat down to muse over this new event. He remembered his first entering that house, when he found his grandfather insensible of his presence, almost an idiot, and quite incapable of superintending the smallest transaction, much less the complicated and innumerable affairs of his trade: and if he, when he entered the house, had been the ignorant ploughboy, what could he have done? He could have had no chance of proving his right to be there; he could not have been able to take at once to business, and, watching his grandfather's days and hours of sanity, make himself necessary to his happiness, and the depositary of his confidence. Yes; he owed everything to the Herberts; and what had he done to repay them, or to shew his gratitude?

His old relative, though on a bed from which he could never again rise, whenever he fancied himself better, or whenever he required a little excitement, would have his books up and examine them; and though now his faculties generally were those of a child, in the matter of accounts he was as sharp as in his best days. He was as avaricious also. A moderate salary was all the grandson could obtain—part of this

he sent to his grandmother, and he had no immediate prospect of obtaining more. But on this night as he sat looking into the expiring fire, and speculating on what he might do if he had money, he began to be discontented with his situation, not only for its disadvantages, but for its advantages. He was discontented because he was not able to assist his friends: and his own personal comforts were unpleasing because he could not share them with those that better deserved them. His conscience was uneasy at possessing the means of enjoyment while those so beloved and respected were struggling to live —the greatest happiness of his life would be to assist them; the next to serve them even as a ploughboy — and before he went to bed he determined that he would not long endure his present position.

CHAPTER IV.

It has been said that Mr. Wilson was rather sedate than boisterous—rather a quiet young man than a showy man; and I have no doubt that this character was adapted to please the plain and somewhat plodding Mr. Barton—but I dare not affirm that he was so greatly pleased as to take much trouble in procuring his frequent visits, though in less than a week Mr. Wilson was certainly again at Brentham. That Fanny was very glad to see him cannot be denied—next to her mother and brother, Wilson was the person she would have most willingly seen; there was so much to be told—the most interesting subject to each was the same—there was no other person within reach of either of them who could join in it. On this occasion, Wilson had greater opportunities of conversing

with Miss Herbert; he called earlier, and as an old friend, Mrs. Barton suggested that Miss Herbert should shew him the gardens, the walks in the park, &c., although it is very probable that she made this suggestion only to get him out of the way for an hour or two, for we all know what tricks ladies contrive to engage an unexpected visitor while they put things to rights in the house.

There was something astounding in this proposition. It was beyond the flight of a sane imagination to think of Miss Herbert of the Hall, that beautiful and accomplished lady—she whom he had so often seen pass in her carriage while he was guiding his horses at the plough—she at whose appearance the head of the oldest and most respectable villager would be bared, and the knee bent in respect and awe—she who had never addressed to him one word, or joined in any action that savoured of equality, except in that one glorious moment when she offered her hand, and wished him well as he was leaving home—to think of her walking with him familiarly and equally, to give him pleasure, when he would gladly have served her in the humblest and most menial capacity! With his modesty and ancient respect for the Herberts, had he possessed an atom less of common sense,

he would have declined this offer out of sheer awkwardness; but Fanny was gone to put on her bonnet, and he was compelled to be calm—if possible. That walk in the beautiful gardens, and through the glades of the park, was not so very terrible, after all—all the danger was in excess of sweetness, and that sort of danger he was not likely to suspect just yet. There was no need of so much speculation and embarrassment; as they lounged, side by side, the talk was all of Burnside; it was the only subject that Fanny cared about, and was just that subject that Wilson could converse on freely, as it related to events, and did not require what is called "small talk," which would soon have upset him. After two hours' walking and talking, they were summoned by the dinner-bell, which perhaps was to both less sweet than the brisk peal overhead to the elderly lady who has delayed the joys of matrimony somewhat too long, or the knell of a resolute single old lady to her nephew who has been long waiting for an opportunity of examining her testamentary dispositions.

My dear young lady, I have no doubt you have just discovered the beginning of a love-affair between these amiable young folks, and are anxiously looking forward to declarations

and acceptations; but I am sorry that you must be disappointed. What this walking in gardens and parks might have led to in time, I will not say; but, alas! for Mr. Wilson—the appearance of a star of greater magnitude at Brentham entirely outblazed his little light. The next time he called at Brentham he was introduced to no less a personage than Lord Collington, who having called on business with Mr. Barton, had been requested to stay to dinner. His lordship, though not thirty years of age, was well known to Wilson by report, as well as to the whole nation, for the fervent zeal with which he supported the Church and Constitution in the House of Peers. But as his lordship's virtues will be somewhat mixed up with those of the persons here described, I may as well give a short sketch of his history.

Lord Collington was the eldest son of a judge, who, as he received only between seven and eight thousand a-year from the country, after making a hundred thousand at the bar, provided for his poor children, who knew nothing about law, by giving them offices in his court, which required no law. The office which the elder son filled produced about six thousand a-year; a brother received from another office about four thousand annually, and both were

quite unconnected with any labour or duties; but this was just as it ought to be, since they were paid, not by the nation, but by those persons with more money than brains—the suitors in the court.

But to relieve this poverty in some degree, the Honourable Mr. Collington, as soon as he left the university, where, perhaps from a sense of his superiority, he did not struggle for honours, was put into an easy office in government, which produced three thousand per annum more. But, alas! governments are not immortal; Mr. Collington went out with his party in a couple of years, and now had nothing but his poor six thousand a-year sinecure to depend on. This went on for some three or four years, when the judge died, leaving a hundred thousand pounds in cash, and an entailed estate worth as much, to his eldest son; his other children were already provided for, the second son, as well as his heir, holding his office for life, along with a few others, which produced considerable pickings, and his daughters, after the good old plan, having been long on the Pension List.

But what were a hundred thousand pounds capital, and six thousand a-year, to a man who was doing the thing in first-rate style! The

hundred thousand were absorbed at once by post-obits, and the annual six thousand was utterly incompetent to maintain him in the necessaries of life—such as race-horses, hunters, gaming, and mistresses. In two years after his father's death, the salary attached to his office was mortgaged, for a considerable term of years, to old Mr. Wilson, for fifty thousand pounds in hand, who did a good deal of business in that way. The fifty thousand soon followed the rest, and Lord Collington's sole dependence was on his uncle, the bishop, who was known to have made half a million in his see, and which was the only thing for which he was noted, as the merits of the right reverend father in God—but what need one speak of the merits of a man who has the fortune to be a lord's brother? The bishop was very old, and a bachelor, so that his property would certainly very soon fall into the hands of our young nobleman; and certain transactions with Mr. Barton, in the way of post-obit bonds, with the collateral security of the family estate, led to his joining the somewhat plebeian circle of Brentham.

In the interval between his lordship's arrival and dinner, Mrs. Barton informed Fanny that Lord Collington was a highly distinguished, a very excellent, and fashionable young man, and

rather gay. Now Fanny, although by no means an ignorant girl, so far as books and the lady like arts and sciences were concerned, was absurdly ignorant of the science of high life, and as Mrs. Barton mentioned Lord Collington's fashion and excellence in the same tone as his gaiety, she took it all for praise, and was prepared to form a very high opinion of his lordship. Personal observation did not disappoint this prepossession. There was a respectfulness in his manner, a quietness in his tone—in fact, he was well bred, and in that, different from the Bartons. The indifference and listlessness of Mrs. Barton, and the somewhat pompous authority of her husband, made Fanny discover a charm in Lord Collington's manners, besides those which they really possessed. That he was handsome, and she a woman, might explain a good deal of her approbation; but that was not all. When she spoke, he listened until she had done; if he asked a question, he appeared really to wish to hear her answer; when she played, he was silent; when he praised, he did it without patronising her with the air of a person obliging her. When it is considered that his lordship had mingled in all kinds of society, from the highest to the lowest, and was utterly without bashfulness, so that whatever he had to

say was delivered clearly and elegantly, it will not be matter of surprise that Fanny rather admired him, and thought him almost as estimable a young man as her brother. Whether she did or did not compare him with Mr. Wilson, her only other male acquaintance, I have no means of knowing; and yet it is not likely that she would compare a peer with a mere clownish lad; but, indeed, at this time, Wilson would have found the comparison very much to his disadvantage. His lordship was full of spirits, and anecdote, and wit; but Wilson was out of spirits, and almost out of temper, at the ease with which he saw attentions paid to a beautiful woman whom he so humbly adored, and the pleasure with which they were received.

What was thought of her by a man so well acquainted with the world as Lord Collington I have no reason to know; and yet, though this was his first visit to Brentham in the two months that Fanny had been there, within a fortnight after this visit he came again twice, which might be fairly imputed to the pretty and accomplished young governess rather than to the more matronly, though still charming, Mrs. Barton. But Fanny, after Lord Collington's second visit, had for some time but little opportunity of proving her first opinion of his cha-

racter, as Mrs. Barton—whether she were over careful of the precious heart of her young dependent, or, in spite of her maternity, not herself insensible to the attentions of a distinguished nobleman — so contrived, that when Lord Collington called, Fanny was particularly engaged with the children in the school-room, and was only admitted to the drawing-room after his lordship had expressed a very strong desire for a little music.

The common run of visitors at Brentham was not of a very aristocratic order; and perhaps Mrs. Barton might be excused for taking some interest in a title; perhaps it reminded her of former times when she met, at her father's house, only people as dignified and as poor as themselves. But this pleasure in his lordship's society was not shared by Wilson, whose personal recollections and prejudices were very different from those of Mrs. Barton. Lord Collington's attentions to Miss Herbert, so much more fluent and eloquent than his own, had caused him greater uneasiness than he had ever felt before; and though he was rather pleased than otherwise that she was kept from their company when his lordship was present, he was not very far from hating him as the cause of his losing the pleasure of seeing her.

CHAPTER V.

But Mrs. Barton's care was not long effectual. It happened a few weeks after Fanny's introduction to Lord Collington, that, as she was walking with the children near the park-gate, she met him as he rode towards the house, when, giving his horse to his servant, he accosted her with a low bow, saying—"I hope you are quite well, Miss Herbert."

"Quite well, thank you, my lord," was the reply.

"Those are very beautiful children."

"Very nice children, indeed," said Fanny.

"Pretty creatures," cried his lordship in raptures, as he took one in his arms and kissed her. "Pray, Miss Barton," said he, "whom do you love best—Miss Herbert or me?"

"Miss Herbert," lisped the child.

"Ah, I was sure that would be the answer.

The members of your family, Miss Herbert, are peculiarly gifted in obtaining the attachment of children."

"They love me, my lord, I suppose, because I love them," said Fanny, blushing at the compliment; "but I do not know what you mean by mentioning my family."

"I beg your pardon. I had forgotten that my good fortune in an introduction to you is so recent. I forgot that you might be unacquainted with circumstances most interesting to me; but you were too young. I alluded to the love and respect with which your father inspired me when I was a boy."

"Did you know my father?" cried Fanny, her eyes filling with tears at this unexpected information.

"Know him! yes—I knew him well. Many a time has he taken me on his knee, and inquired into my studies, when he called on my father. I was very glad to see him. I loved him like a relative of my own; for you must have noticed, Miss Herbert, that he was endowed with those amiable and gentle qualities that create love in the hearts of the good—to which class I dare not claim to belong—and more certainly kindle the affection of children, and I was a child then."

"Yes, my lord," said Fanny, very earnestly; "my father was a good man; everybody that knew him loved him. But it is strange—I do not recollect my father mentioning his intimacy with your lordship, nor my mother, that you had been a visitor at Alverley."

"Perhaps your father did not do me the honour of mentioning me, Miss Herbert. I could not expect it. I did not say that your father loved, or was interested in me; I said only that he had gained my love and reverence. It was never my good fortune to visit Alverley. At the time I speak of, I was a child under the care of my distinguished father, who pursued his profession too incessantly to allow himself such pleasures as mere friendly visits; and when in after life I was honoured with invitations, I was myself too busy to be able to accept them. My life has been fully occupied. I seldom left the university while I was a student; immediately afterwards, I was placed by his Majesty in the ministry, and when faction prevailed over the supporters of the constitution, which gave your father so much pain, I went abroad."

"Then you are not at all acquainted with my mother?" asked Fanny.

"No. I am sorry that I have not that pleasure. I regret that I did not formerly accept

the invitations of my respected friend; but who can foresee the consequences of his actions? I, of course, met your father in London every session; but even though our country residences were in opposite directions from London, I would have availed myself of that privilege of an intimate friend, if I could have known, or suspected the sudden—." This allusion, which Fanny supposed to refer to her father's death, drew tears to her eyes again, which Lord Collington observing, he said, in a kind and sympathizing manner—

"Pardon me, Miss Herbert—this is a subject on which I feel deeply; it is a most sacred subject. Your father was a witness to my first efforts in the house of peers—he was the warmest in praising me—his praise was the dearest I received—I might almost say that he was my tutor—his memory is mixed up with all my early hopes and pleasures. How happy should I be, if I could serve his family whom he must have so tenderly loved!" As his lordship uttered these words, they came within sight of the hall, a couple of hundred yards distant, when, bowing respectfully, he left her, and entered the house.

Had Wilson been here this evening, the contrast would have been greater than ever—not

only between the manners of himself, and those of the peer; but in their reception, and he probably would have felt more dissatisfied with himself than before. Fanny's heart was melted by the conversation respecting her parent, whom all her dearest friends had such cause to mourn; and the fervent respect and veneration with which his name had been mentioned, kindled in her bosom a very warm feeling of approval and admiration towards the friend—she seemed to have gained another brother. Many times in the course of the evening did she wish to speak of William to lead to an introduction, and she was prevented doing it only from an unconscious sense of maidenly propriety. But all she could do to gratify her father's friend she did. There was no need of asking her to play or sing—no need of scheming to place himself by her side; the young creature would have sung and played for ever to give him pleasure; and she found it exceeding sweet to listen to the voice which had been so often listened to, and probably loved by her father.

Yes, happy was it for Wilson that he was not there: he must have been neglected. It was certainly pleasant to meet one who had been, and indeed was now, in a certain way connected with the family, and was grateful to every living

member of it; but it was nothing in comparison with talking to one who had been a personal friend to her departed parent, and who mourned him as fervently as she did. That sacred grief of friendship seemed to create him one of the family: to recover the friend of a departed parent, was gaining a most precious relic of that adored person. He came to her recommended by the most prevailing merit, the love of a revered father, which death had elevated beyond the reach of destruction or change. It seemed a duty more incumbent on her than all others, to esteem and respect the man who had gained the love of her father in his lifetime, and shewed his estimation of it, by mourning him with the reverential and lasting grief of a son.

CHAPTER VI.

A FEW days after the above interview, Mr. Wilson accompanied Mr. Barton from London to Brentham, when, to his great disappointment, he again found Lord Collington comfortably seated in the drawing-room; and however consolatory it might be that Mrs. Barton, and not Miss Herbert, was his companion, this consolation became of a very doubtful nature, when the dinner passed away without his seeing her, who was the chief object of his visit.

Dinner was always on the table at five, to suit Mr. Barton's convenience, who arrived at Brentham precisely at that hour. It happened on this evening, that a very beautiful July sun threw its mellow light on the table, and drew their eyes to the wide-spreading lawn and uplands, glowing with unaccustomed charms; and

immediately after dinner, before either gentleman had made up his mind as to which vintage he intended to abide by, they walked to the window to admire the prospect. After a cursory glance, Lord Collington begged to be excused for a few minutes; he would return immediately—his horse was rather poorly, and being a favourite, he wished to look at him for a moment, to see that all was right. As Lord Collington left the room, Wilson fancied he perceived the outline of a female, bearing a strong resemblance to Miss Herbert, and a couple of children, walking among the old trees of the park, about half a mile off; and very heartily did he curse Lord Collington, both for being the means of keeping Miss Herbert from the room, and for leaving it himself, by which he was left with Mr. Barton, whom, in common civility, he could not leave, to procure an accidental meeting with Miss Herbert in the park.

Lord Collington was absent until nearly sunset, which was about an hour; and when Mr. Barton expressed a hope that nothing very serious ailed the horse, he said that he had been enjoying the beautiful evening by a walk through the gardens. Yet there was a change in his lordship's manner, not altogether imputable to admiration of the beautiful appearances of nature.

He spoke little, his wit was gone, he was not even so clear as usual in what he did say; the only one of his peculiarities which remained unaltered, was his potatory gifts, for in a quarter of an hour he drank as much wine as the other two gentlemen had drunk in an hour, and as much as even he generally drank in half an hour. Wilson fancied he should not speak to Miss Herbert this evening, and the fear was justified by the event. When they adjourned to the tea-table, Mrs. Barton alone was present. Lord Collington did not inquire, as usual, for Miss Herbert, or express a desire for music; and when Wilson inquired, he was informed that Miss Herbert was rather poorly, and had retired to her own room. This was the dullest of all evenings Wilson had spent at Brentham. The peer was as common-place as a commoner; Mr. Barton was, as usual, not very brilliant; Mrs. Barton was too lady-like to talk much; Wilson was not sufficiently interested in the persons present, and too much interested in a person absent, to take uncommon exertions to establish a lively conversation, and left the great people at the very first opportunity.

Now, my dear young lady, who are so skilful in detecting the coming events of novels from the shadows they cast before them, you will

doubtless suppose that that angel, Lord Collington, having fallen desperately in love with Miss Herbert, had accidentally met her as he was examining his horse, and had laid his fortune, his honours, and himself at her feet—that he had been accepted, and that Fanny had retired to her room in the bashful agitation usual in such cases. You, doubtless, expect me to furnish you with the particulars of the scene, that you may be prepared to behave properly when your path is stopped by a "handsome young lord," crouching before you for favour.

This supposition is not altogether erroneous: Lord Collington did meet Miss Herbert; but, I am sorry to say, not accidentally. His anxiety respecting his horse must have evaporated rather suddenly, after leaving the dining-room, for when he reached the stables he had not sufficient left to induce him even to enter them. He walked on into the thickest part of the park, and after a circuitous ramble of ten minutes' duration, suddenly came upon Miss Herbert and the two children. The pleasure of the meeting was mutual. His lordship took off his hat, and Miss Herbert smiled; he modestly offered his hand, and she, blushing, gave him hers in return. Her little heart bounded to meet her father's friend; perhaps there was no

person in the world she would have been so glad to meet saving her brother or her mother.

"Do you know, Miss Herbert," said his lordship, "I envy you the faculty of gaining the love of such sweet cherubs as these more than even brilliant accomplishments."

"I fancy, my lord," she replied, "the means are very simple. They are very ready to love those that love them."

"Not exactly, Miss Herbert. Children certainly will not love those that love them; but love alone will not reach their young hearts. To gain the love of a child, a person must be endowed with sincerity which the false customs of society have not touched, with simplicity which experience of the world has not vitiated; accomplishments and virtues must be without pride, and the heart as pure and as humble as that of a little child. Yes; I envy you this faculty, which political turmoil has deprived me of."

"But is it not somewhat unreasonable," asked Fanny, "to expect to possess at once the highest and the lowliest faculties? Political ambition finds its peculiar enjoyments as well as ambition of a humbler kind. The pursuits which may have prevented your cultivating those humble affections which gain the love of children, have

found their gratification in commanding the applause, and overpowering or daring the opposition of men. The power to awaken the interest, and touch the hearts of children, would be only an accident in a brilliant career; but to me it is no accident—it must be the purpose of my labours, and the object of my ambition."

"That is true, certainly—very true. You are a better philosopher than I am, Miss Herbert. But your very just remarks incline me to mention a thought which has struck me, if you will allow me the liberty of a friend."

"I shall feel honoured, my lord, by your speaking freely to me."

"I was thinking—excuse me, Miss Herbert—that though the education of children, especially of such sweet children as these, must be a very pure and delightful office, yet, Miss Herbert, the talents and accomplishments requisite are surely not of the highest order. Allow me to speak plainly—I must know that all your early years, but indeed all your years are early, have been incessantly employed in prosecuting the beautiful sciences in which you so greatly excel——"

"Nay, my lord——"

"Pardon my freedom, Miss Herbert, I speak of what I have witnessed. How many ladies,

of double your age, have you met, that excel you in any one of the accomplishments, the rudiments of which you are teaching these children! I cannot believe that you do not sometimes feel that your situation is below your merits, and that in place of teaching rudiments to children, you ought to be in the society of accomplished men and women, delighting and astonishing them with your perfect mastery of the abstruser parts of those sciences."

"Your lordship flatters me," said Fanny; "but I am content as I am; and you forget, that to indulge in such thoughts would do me no good. The poverty of my family will make it impossible for me to aspire to a more elevated station."

"Ah, I greatly lament that such should be the case!—and yet a pecuniary misfortune ought not to be allowed to have such an effect. We are all so liable to misfortune, that a kind of balance of good and evil should be struck among friends; the fortunate should remedy the disaster of the unfortunate, and the unfortunate should not be too proud to submit to it. Excuse me, Miss Herbert, I fear you have carried pride and independence to an unwarrantable extent. Even from a proper respect for yourself, you ought to have allowed your friends to preserve you from

a situation so infinitely below your merit, and where you are in some degree subject to persons so inferior in accomplishments and breeding to your own."

"Our friends were not such as you describe," said Fanny, smiling as she remembered the condolence of their friends. "It was not altogether pride that kept us from receiving obligations—we did not find a friend who would suffer us to incur any."

"No!—yet I ought not to be amazed," replied Lord Collington. "It has been my lot to witness much of the heartlessness of the world. I regret more than ever that I was not a visitor at Brentham, for I might have been able—but it is too late now to remedy what has passed; you must allow me to serve you, and remove you to a situation more worthy of you than this."

"You are very kind, my lord—very kind," said Fanny, with considerable agitation, and hardly able to keep herself from crying at the sympathetic tones of so faithful a friend. "I am content," she continued; "there is nothing which I ought to complain of. But—excuse me—if I might be so bold——"

"Pray, my dear Miss Herbert, do not hesitate," said Lord Collington, affectionately pressing her hand; "if I can gratify you in any

manner I shall esteem myself highly honoured."

"Though I have cause to be thankful that I am so comfortably situated—so much more so than hundreds no poorer than myself—yet, my lord, I have a brother, who, I fear, though he would do honour to any office——"

"A brother!" cried Lord Collington; "dear me, you surprise and delight me! Pray where can I find him?"

Fanny gave William's address in London to his lordship, who observed—"I am very much obliged to you, Miss Herbert, for your kindness in mentioning your brother; I will endeavour to make a friend of him; and if I should find him not so well off as we could wish, I have no doubt that I shall be able to procure him a situation of a few hundred pounds a-year in one of the government offices, until I shall be able to serve him more effectually."

"You make me very happy," said Fanny; and she felt very happy too.

"Nay, my dear Miss Herbert," said the generous nobleman—"I am the obliged party; for surely a warm and honourable friend, such as I look to gain in your brother, is worth more than a few hundreds of paltry gold. But whatever services I may render him, I shall suffer

the same anxiety on your account—the same wish to behold you in a sphere where you might give your beautiful faculties fair play, and be the life and happiness of society, which nature intended you to be. I have spoken warmly—I have said so much, that I must say all that my heart is bursting to utter. I was not disinterested in what I said—alas! who is? It was, perhaps, more for my own sake than yours that I spoke. The beautiful humility of your nature may keep you ignorant of your own gifts and graces; yet surely you cannot but know that nature has endowed you with a form and face suitable to your exquisite talents; it was impossible for me to be insensible of them. No, Miss Herbert, I love you, and must ever love you very fondly and faithfully."

"My lord, you surprise me! I—I—did not expect—did not suppose——"

As Fanny replied, she withdrew her hand from Lord Collington's, turned towards the hall, and rather hastened her steps.

"Excuse the abruptness of my avowal, my dear Miss Herbert—the peculiarity of my situation—the warmth of my regard urged me!"

"Pray, my lord, desist," said Fanny, in great confusion; "I cannot hear anything more on this subject—I am so unprepared——"

"I trust, Miss Herbert, I have not offended you with my passion."

"I am not offended, my lord; I am grateful for your good opinion. But—but—I have not thought—I am not able to speak on this subject —you must allow me to go home."

"Permit me, my dear Miss Herbert, to make one remark before you leave me. I have said truly that I love you with the utmost devotion; and were we both in different circumstances, my love is so pure, that I could not be content with any return, save what had been produced by it alone; I would plead nothing but love—my heart alone should address your heart. But now, anxious on your account as well as my own, I must beg you earnestly to consider what my offer will free you from, and what it will put in your power. I do not wish you merely to consider the difference between my house, in Harley Street, and Brentham, and the difference of your power; but I beg you to consider that you will be enabled to rescue your family from their undeserved misfortunes, and establish them comfortably and respectably in society."

"I am very grateful—I shall think of it all—I am not insensible to the advantages of your offer," Fanny replied, hastily; "your goodness will not be lost on me. But I must reflect be-

fore I decide—pray allow me to go in—I—I will speak to you shortly."

Lord Collington might not have allowed Fanny to depart without an effort to gain a more decided reply—without perhaps attempting one of those slight freedoms which lovers consider their privilege when they are not absolutely rejected, as in the present case; but he could not doubt that the timid creature was excessively agitated at what he had said, and he had no doubt that he should, in the end, find his advantage in suffering her to depart.

CHAPTER VII.

My dear young lady, learned in the duties and faculties of heroines of novels, I fear poor Fanny Herbert, who was no heroine, will fall from your good graces when I tell you how she acted in this love affair. I know very well that it is an invariable thing for young ladies, over twelve or thirteen, in novels, to be thoroughly initiated and profoundly eloquent in love matters, and to become eternally in love, or immutably indifferent at the first sight of a Mr. Orlando, or a young lord; but I must confess that in neither of these respects did Miss Herbert follow her interesting predecessors. She was a simple-hearted, humble, and affectionate girl, the very reverse of a heroine; and instead of talking learnedly about love, there was no subject which she would have been more loth to touch, because it was that which she under-

stood the least. I will not claim for her so great a portion of idiotic purity or angelic sentimentalism, as to assert that it was a subject which had never crossed her mind, since the commonest portion of speculative power and observation must have brought to her notice this most important of human relations. But like every other perfectly modest and uncourted maiden, she had thought of an union with the other sex as something rather disagreeable and repulsive; and so far as she had decided on the subject, had resolved that she would live and die Miss Herbert. Everybody knows how readily these immutable resolutions generally change when offers are made; and my readers will doubtless expect that Miss Herbert, as a matter of course, immediately gave her consent to such "a nice young lord." But in this she did not follow the good old plan; and though she did not at once reject Lord Collington, she speculated rather on how her family would be affected by his offer than herself. She was pleased with the offer, certainly; because it shewed that she had pleased Lord Collington, who by his manners and his old connexion with her father had pleased her; but a sudden conviction of the immense importance to herself of her decision, compelled her to pause before she formed it.

She hastened home, and went up to her own room to think. She was not poorly, as Mrs. Barton had said; or, at all events, if she suffered from anything it was from a fit—of confusion. What would many a thousand fashionable beauties have given for a blush like that which so rapidly went and came on Fanny's burning cheeks. The alternations of white and red were at least equal in beauty of tint to the best pearl powder and rouge of Delcroix. Poor little creature, she was in a desperate way; her heart beat and her breath failed; she could not think at the moment that such an offer was one of the commonest and most common-place things in the world. She was too young, too ignorant—perhaps too innocent—to prefer the name Lady Collington to the name Fanny Herbert; or the house in Harley Street, with Lord Collington, to any humble cottage in which her mother would be with her; but she was most powerfully conscious of the ability which her exaltation would afford to raise those whom she loved. It seemed a matter of course, that if she were endowed with rank and fortune, her mother and brother must be at least above want. She was thankful that she had gained so true, so disinterested, so pleasing a friend as Lord Collington; and it seemed the clearest duty of reason

to be grateful for an offer which not only promised such blessings for those she loved, but was so honourable to herself.

Lord Collington had promised to protect William, and secure him a handsome provision; and could she refuse him a request so advantageous to herself alone? Above all, if she refused him, would he not naturally refuse to interest himself in her concerns? Every consideration of worldly policy was in favour of her acceptance of Lord Collington's offer—all that opposed it was the instinct of a pure, sincere female heart.

After imagining the advantages of being Lady Collington, she imagined the way in which it would affect herself. The duties and the situation of a wife were strangers to her thoughts; and she blushed as she now run them over in her mind. The familiarities of a wedded life, which are the sweetest subjects of thought to her who loves, were to Fanny suggestive of disgust and fear. She entered into no long disquisition on love; she did not ask herself whether she loved or not—the modest chastity of a heart which did not love, made all such disquisitions and self-questionings useless; it stood in the place of reason and sentiment, and by its natural repugnance to those endearments which love alone can render sweet to a

modest woman, shewed her that she did not love, and made her reject Lord Collington.

But his lordship was too true a lover, and Fanny too gentle in her cruelty to suffer this refusal to be final. He contrived to meet her more than once, and press his offer on her modestly though earnestly. There were moments, perhaps, when Fanny wavered—when she wished for the opinion of a friend; she thought of her mother, her brother, Mr. Wilson, and Mrs. Barton, but felt an insurmountable repugnance to mention such a thing. She steadily and finally rejected Lord Collington, and to spare further importunity, confined herself to her room, or walked only close to the house when he called, to the great chagrin of Mr. Thomas Wilson, who was by no means willing to exchange her society and conversation, for those of Mr. and Mrs. Barton, even with a peer of the realm thrown into the bargain.

END OF VOL. II.

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AUTHOR OF

IN THREE VOL

VOL. III

THE HERBERTS

BY

E AUTHOR OF "ELPHINSTONE."

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BOOK THE EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

When I was a little boy, fond of reading about the wonders of distant lands, both as regards physical objects and the manners and customs of the different branches of the human family, nothing puzzled or amused me more in my geographical researches than the transcripts of Egyptian drawings of men, as found on the mummies, the obelisks, the walls,—in short, on every substance of Egypt which had withstood the ravages of thirty centuries. The thing which first puzzled me, was the exact similarity of all the figures; for not the remotest variation one

from the other, not the shortest excursion of fancy could be found in the whole range of human outlines; in whatever district, on whatever substance, or at whatever time they might have been executed, there seemed to have been one original model in the minds of all artists, which certainly was not the body of man as he had been known to live and move on any spot of this earth. There were always the same profile of features, unlighted by a single ray of intelligence, surmounted by a square wig of black corkscrew ringlets; the same full eye in the middle of the cheek; the same broad horizontal shoulders, from which were suspended, by very awkward machinery, a pair of angular substances reaching down to where the knees should have been, and which were supposed to have been intended for arms; the same pinched-in waist and belly, more collapsed than that of a man in the last agony of starvation; and the same long, kneeless, and calfless legs, the outlines of which were two straight lines, drawn from the body to

the ground, where they were fastened to other substances, of about a yard in length, which are supposed to be feet. Now these pictures of animals engaged in human occupations, but less like men than apes or puppets—these outlines of animal machines exquisitely adapted to be incapable of motion, and to be utterly unable to accomplish what they are represented as doing, puzzled me, since I could scarcely imagine how such an outline could ever have been formed, even in the infancy of art, much less what qualities it possessed, to render it so attractive to a whole nation, that every artist should seize it, and copy it as a model.

After a while, however, I procured the works of Champollion and Rosellini, with some others of those learned men who have discovered abstracts of the sciences in the toads, beetles, arrows, and asses'-heads, on the Egyptian pyramids and obelisks, and who, although each gives a different version of every hieroglyphic, are all, doubtless, to be implicitly believed.

These learned gentlemen made me acquainted with a fact which must be as well-known to my readers, as to me—namely, that the ancient Egyptians had such respect for the "human form divine," that they would not allow their artists to exert their fancy or imagination in designing its lineaments, but set apart certain families to perform hereditarily for the human form, what, in certain countries of Europe, certain families have been hereditarily compelled to do on the human body—namely, execute them; and as in the one case a certain sword or axe would descend from father to son, so in the other case descended the model above-described. And as, if any person besides the hereditary executioner lopped the head from a body, he would be considered guilty of murder, so if any person other than the hereditary portrait-painter presumed to "take off" an individual, he was liable to be killed for the crime, because such an act tended to give a latitude to painters and sculptors, which might eventually terminate in

their caricaturing the divine lineaments of man.

Now there would appear, at the first glance, something sensible in this law of the Egyptians, if it had been worked out from imitation of the purest models of antiquity; but when we know that the very model which they chose out of respect to man, was the most ludicrous caricature of the human form which the world has ever seen, one feels it difficult to think on the subject without bursting into inextinguishable laughter.

But, my dear reader—for dear you are to me, since I calculate that every person who reads my book will certainly take a liking to the author, and will therefore gain my esteem—I say, my dear reader, however you may be inclined to laugh at this folly of the Egyptians, I can point out to you a folly of the same kind, and of a grosser degree, at your own doors. Look at the novel writers of the last fifty years, and tell me what they have done, and what they are doing! With about three glorious

exceptions, have they not all committed the same folly as you laugh at in the Egyptians? Have they not, of their own free will, done what the Egyptian artists were compelled by their laws to do? And yet, because you do not consider the subject thoroughly, you believe that we novelists are very clever fellows, while the Egyptians were nothing but idiots for doing, on compulsion, what our novelists do willingly, in a more intense degree, in every work which issues from the press.

The Egyptian sculptors and painters professed and attempted to figure the body of man—the novelists profess to exhibit the human mind and character, in the myriads of phases formed by passion, education, and circumstances. Now, the mind of man must be allowed to vary infinitely more than the body. Two legs, ditto arms, eyes, and ears, a mouth, and a nose, a body and a head, will always form a somewhat near approach to a portrait. Indeed, in taking the likeness of any individual, a nose will always

be in length from one to six inches, a mouth seldom reaches further than from ear to ear—that is, there are certain bounds within which all portraits of individuals must be drawn; yet, confined as a portrait must be within the limits of a few inches, the world has never yet beheld two individuals perfectly alike in body, and therefore a portrait of one man has never been a correct portrait of another. But what are the varieties of the human body compared with those of the human mind? What are those few inches, within which the lines of bodily individuality must be drawn, compared with the illimitable variety which exists in the character of universal man! The passions of the body, the sentiments of the heart, the faculties of the mind, mixed up in various quantities, and acted on by the concussion of other minds, and by the circumstances of social life, are the foundation of all that is understood by individual character. Now these particulars, which form the individuality of mankind, are really so vast in number, and so

various in proportion, that, perhaps, no two human beings ever existed who bore a very close resemblance to each other; and therefore our novelists must be, in reality, more ridiculous artists than the Egyptian painters, since, while professing to give a correct picture of man, as he lives and moves in the various lights and shapes of society, they shew you individual after individual, through the immense details of thousands and thousands of volumes, without a single variation from an unknown model of dullness and sameness, all thinking and talking, as Wordsworth's sheep fed—"forty like one."

Speaking of a poet, suggests a method of explaining the curious circumstance that novelists take one dull, invariable model to paint an object more than all others distinguished by its infinite variability: indeed, if we look on novelists as exhibitors of the passions of mankind, we may consider them all to be poets, and a comparison of them with three of the greatest poets of the world, will shew how they have

come to be what they are. A work of genius is but the transcript of what passes in the mind of a man of genius; and consequently, as the qualities of great men vary, so will the works which they produce. The instances I was about to name, are—Shakspere, Milton, and Byron.

It may be said that Shakspere never gave a picture of his own mind; and that is true, though only in a confined sense. Shakspere's wonderful genius was never circumscribed by the habitudes of an individual formation; his mind grasped the whole range of human character as it lay beneath him, and he exhibited it in all imaginable shapes as it existed for him and for the intellect to arise in all the future generations of the world. His individuality was absorbed by an universality of vision, and a power of interpenetrating examination which gathered up all possible phases of human intellect and character, and spread them forth again to the vision of eternity, arrayed in the brilliant and unfading brightness generated by a godlike

BOOK THE EIGHTH

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the darkness of one of the most astonishing intellects the world has produced.

The three poets above-mentioned are, then, the representatives of the only three classes of imaginative genius; and these classes of poets may be exactly paralleled by the classes of novelists. There is the first and greatest class, where universal man is exhibited without reference to the author's feelings and prejudices; and here Fielding and Scott take their places by Shakspere. Next is the class wherein the author's peculiar temperament is poured into the forms of society; and here Rousseau, Voltaire, and Edgeworth, take their place by Milton. Last is the class in which the man of genius pours out the feelings and peculiarities of his own mind and circumstances, with an apparent unconsciousness that any others exist—the class in which the author impresses his own individual character on everything which he handles; and here ninety-nine out of every hundred of our great living novelists must take their places by the side of Byron.

Be not amazed, my simple reader, at this opinion; I will soon convince you of its truth. The great majority of our novelists, like Byron, do not portray actual life as it is recognised by any one who has an understanding to comprehend it; they draw from their own bosoms what they write. Now, if they possessed any portion of the talent of Byron, the very egotism or individualism concentered in their works would give them an interest such as one feels in any description of the heart of a living man; but unfortunately these authors have not such an inward store to draw from as Byron had. Although they write on man, they know nothing concerning man; they give all they are able to give; they pour out all their acquirements in their books; they make all men copies of themselves, which is the sole reason why their books are generally filled with ignorance, dulness, and impertinence.

CHAPTER II.

My good reader, if you are one of those happy persons who have no opinions of their own, but take them, like hats or coats, from other people whose profession it is to make them, you will doubtless conclude that Mr. Burgess the lawyer must be a very good kind of man, and very amiable, because he was eccentric. Not that every kind of eccentricity is considered a proof of amiability, because it is a notorious truth, that, if a man attempts to benefit his fellow-creatures, or pushes any other diffusive virtue beyond the limits of venerable and sanctified

commonplace, he is pronounced eccentric, then is suspected, and at length hunted or clamoured down. But if a man practise the home-keeping virtues which benefit himself alone, he is safe; and let him carry them out into a monstrous exaggeration, and support them by continual caution, universal suspicion, and all kinds of meanness, until the virtue becomes a heart-hardening and conscience-searing vice, the man being a votary of the dullness, the cant, and the hypocrisy of commonplace will be pronounced eccentric, but a very steady, and really, on the whole, a good kind of man.

Mr. Burgess practised the virtue of economy, which benefited nobody but himself; he had saved thirty thousand pounds by it; and had probably never done a good deed towards a fellow-creature; but economy is such a plain, well-understood, and universally-admired virtue, that cunning and avarice, which are so useful to it, and which Mr. Burgess had employed, will, by the generality of the world, be praised as

beautiful domestic virtues, and our attorney will be considered in the main a good sort of man, by that great majority of mankind who admire most those men that most sedulously take care of number one.

This opinion, though generally false, was not strikingly so in the case of Mr. Burgess. He was not a good man—not a kind man—not an honest man; that was out of the question, since he was an attorney. Yet, comparatively speaking, and making due allowance for the misfortune of his profession, he was not a very bad man. If he were what an honest man must call a rogue, his roguery was confined to his office, and kept within the bounds, if it were not even suggested by the spirit, of the law. He was very different from the creeping, poisonous pettifogger of the country town, who wriggles himself into the confidence, and who nestles like an evil spirit at the ear of the passionate man; and who gives up his soul a willing and slavish instrument to the vicious man—if they

have money; who lies in wait day and night to discover the infirmities of human nature, that he may nourish the faintest breath of suspicion; and who steps between forgiving enemies, and sharpens the dagger of hate; in short, one who lives on the filth of human nature and relishes that bread of life. Mr. Burgess was not such a man as that. Though a general practitioner, the chief of his practice was conveyancing, in which, though a man may easily acquire cunning, he will, not without natural talent in that direction, acquire cruelty. William Herbert, therefore, though he had once thought of such a clerkship with horror, now engaged in its duties with tolerable composure, being not quite so nice as he had been some months back. A principal cause of his resignation, was a remembrance of the pangs of hunger—a very powerful reasoner. The few disagreeable circumstances of his situation he submitted to as a matter of necessity atoned for by ability to eat, and indeed his chief employment was copying papers

which contained a great many words, to which he found very great difficulty in attaching a meaning.

The first few weeks that William spent in Mr. Burgess's office, were the pleasantest he had known for a considerable time; indeed, since he had left his mother's house. The loneness of his occupation did not annoy him, as the anticipation of it had formerly done. He worked pretty well for a certain number of hours, when he was at liberty; and this with sufficient wages to keep him from want, was a great comfort after what he had suffered. Besides this, his sister was in a reputable family, and his mother was well, and not in want; and this state of the family was very consoling to him, although in that humble and stagnant comfort that seemed a total end of his ambition—a certainty that the family could never rise again.

It may be wondered at, that in William's adventures and distresses he made no application to Mr. Wilson, who certainly would not have

suffered him to want. But William knew nothing of him; he had scarcely ever seen him, and never but as a ploughboy. Very probably, too, a bit of family pride might pop in, if such a suggestion arose, and make him averse to call for assistance on one whose situation in life was so exceedingly humble. Perhaps, too, he could not imagine such a person possessed of the ability to assist him; and the two persons had never met in London. That they did not meet at Brentham must be imputed to a circumstance about to be related, which employed William's thoughts, and took from him the power of employing his evenings in journeys to Brentham, so long as he knew that Fanny was doing well.

Part of William Herbert's duty in Mr. Burgess's office, was to transact his employer's business with the daily press. Now it happened that one of the first advertisements which he carried to the newspaper offices, and the due insertion of which he had to ascertain, was as follows:—"If M. W., who left O. about a year

back will apply personally to Mr. Burgess, Solicitor, in the Temple, she may hear of something to her advantage." This advertisement had appeared nearly every day of the three months William had spent in Mr. Burgess's office, when one afternoon, after his master had left for the day, he was called from his desk, the only one at that time occupied in the office, to reply to a knock at the door.

The simple reader may consider so common an event hardly worth describing, but if he will read on patiently, he will consider that this very common occurrence was of considerable importance to this relation. When he opened the door he saw—not a poor rogue come to beg for a little time; not a rich rogue come to order a wretched debtor to be sent to prison; not the miserable mother of a starving family come to implore, with useless eloquence, the release of her husband from the harpies of the spunging-house; not a bloated bumbailiff come for warrants, writs, fiats, &c., to torture poor

wretches who had unfortunately put themselves in the grasp of the powerful;—no, not one of these, the most frequent visitors of a lawyer's office was now at the door; but a young creature, in the very bloom of womanhood, whose form and features were of exceeding beauty. She was clad with a rich simplicity; her garments followed the fashion of the day, rather in general arrangement than in particulars, which bespoke as much the woman of good sense as of good society. Perhaps the most experienced judge might have been puzzled to decide as to what portion of society she belonged to; but William thought not of her dress, so astonished was he at her beauty. She was not more than nineteen, and though if she had been less beautifully formed, she might have appeared too tall to be a perfect figure, the exact proportion of all the parts of her frame, the easy and elastic motion, and the voluptuous undulations of the general outline, united with her superior height, to throw around

her an air of nobleness, while the brilliant carnation of youth, and a certain air of ingenuous good-humoured innocence, which did not detract from an expression of great intellectual power, made her seem what is infinitely better than nobleness or grandeur in woman—a creature dearly to be loved.

It will be readily believed that this description of the lawyer's charming visitor has taken me a longer time to put down with pen and ink, than it took William Herbert to gather the same information with his eyes. In fact, all that is here set down, and a great deal besides that will not be set down, he learned by the very first glance directed towards her. Indeed, he had but little more time for making observations, as the lady seemed in haste, which might well be, considering what place she was in; for, as a matter of course, if even the young lady, unlike young ladies in general, had been willing to be observed and admired, the office of a lawyer would be the very last place in which a decent

woman would seek it. As soon as William had opened the door, she said, with a questioning accent—"You are Mr. Burgess, I presume?"

"No," William replied; "Mr. Burgess has left the office for to-day."

"When shall I be able to see him?" the lady asked.

"He will be here to-morrow, at noon," William answered.

"May I be sure to meet him then?" she asked.

William replied in the affirmative, and the young lady went down.

There was nothing very eloquent or very original in this short dialogue; yet I question whether the highest flight of Cicero or Demosthenes would have had so powerful an effect on William, as those two or three simple sentences spoken by the young lady; for he stood with the opened door in his hand, gazing down the passage through which she had passed away, unconscious of everything, save an undefinable

feeling of delight and astonishment. What could bring one so young, so fair, so innocent, into such a neighbourhood?—in what niche of that office were stowed away the meshes of chicanery which had entangled her, and brought her thither? Such a person in such a place seemed like a bird of paradise flitting a moment before the dull eyes of a denizen of the frozen north, or the evanescent vision of one of heaven's most radiant angels to the despairing inhabitant of a dungeon.

These thoughts and fancies must have passed rapidly through William's mind, for the lady had not been more than a minute beyond the corner, when just as he was blaming himself for the modesty or awkwardness of suffering her to depart without giving her address or name, and wondering whether he should ever really see her again, she again turned the corner, and he ran to his desk with a confusion and earnestness as great as though he had just been discovered in a snug act of felony.

"I am sorry to trouble you, sir," the lady said, when she came to the office door,—"but a very great crowd has gathered in the street through which I was to pass. I am afraid to enter the crowd; I am unacquainted with the streets by which I might avoid it, and know not where to procure a carriage. If you will allow a servant to guide me a short distance, I should be much obliged to you."

"There is no servant here besides myself," William replied, with a crimsoned face; "but if you will allow me to conduct you, I shall be happy."

The lady thanked him, and he immediately fastened up his desk, went out with her, locked the door, and walked by her side to the entrance into Fleet Street. He found that it was that greatest day in the year for London children, aldermen, and pickpockets, when the annual magistrate is sworn in by the judges, and exhibited gratis in his gilded coach to his unwashed subjects. William cast a hasty glance down the

Strand, when seeing no termination to the dense mass of human life, he led his companion back by the office into a series of lanes and courts, which ended in a great thoroughfare distant from that occupied by the procession. For a considerable distance William had walked by her side, but the narrow lanes were so dirty and uneven, that after debating the subject very earnestly in his mind, with many fears and much hesitation, he ventured to offer his arm.

William Herbert was almost entirely unused to communication with the angels of life, and the glorious creature at his side seemed to him, at first, of too high an order of humanity to be conversed with in an ordinary manner—no mouth seemed worthy of addressing her, save that famous one in the fairy tale, every word of which produced a pearl or a diamond. From all this, the reader will conclude that William Herbert was bashful, which was the fact. Now, I have seen a bashful gentleman, with the

partner of his heart, in the safest place in the world for a little quiet talk—in a ball-room—afraid to commence a conversation, every word of which would have been more prized by both than the wealth of the Indies. I have known a bashful gentleman, with a charming young lady, walking along a secluded green lane on a summer's day, and lecturing her on violets, primroses, and sparrows, in the desperate necessity of talking, and the terrible fear of saying what was rushing out of every corner of his heart, and what the lady's heart was thoroughly prepared to welcome; I have heard of a bashful gentleman in his lady's boudoir, turning over the leaves of her music-book, or examining her album, as a means of escape from the terror of hearing his own voice, when a single word which was on the lady's lips would have sounded to him like a voice from heaven; but never did I see or hear of a bashful gentleman conducting a lady along a rough and dirty lane, without finding or making an opportunity for

converse. A lady may pass with a gentleman, "in maiden meditation fancy free," along Bond-street or Piccadilly, or through the parks; but let her beware of Thames-street, Lower or Upper, for if the gentleman lead her there, he will assuredly "pop the question."

This was, in some respects, the case with William Herbert. He did not, to be sure, "pop the question," but he spoke concerning the weather, the streets, and the scavengers, to which, of course, the lady replied; and as he did not now stand face to face with her beauty, the clear and musical tones of her voice encouraged him to pursue the conversation, which he did, with so much effect, that when they emerged from the congeries of filthy alleys on the open plain at Charing Cross, where there was an abundance of coaches, both the lady and gentleman passed them without notice, as though they had forgotten that a coach-stand was the professed object of their search.

What the lady thought of her companion,

may, perhaps, be never disclosed; but, at all events, this is not the time for relating it; and what the gentleman thought of his companion could not be described, save by the tongue of a poet eloquent with the inspiration of a youthful passion. Not that our young gentleman was thus suddenly possessed by a mighty passion, for I have no doubt that he would have made affidavit, if questioned on the subject, that he was not at all in love, and, of course, he was more likely than any other person to be acquainted with the truth of the matter. Mr. Herbert, moreover, was a philosopher in learning and practice, and kept his heart as much above the empire of the passions as philosophers usually do. But with whatever earnestness William might have denied the soft impeachment, he would not have denied that he was now spending the sweetest moments of his life. The young lady's voice alone was a call to the heart of man to rejoice, so very brilliant were its tones, and so full of feeling their arrangement. But her

thoughts were worthy of the mode in which they were conveyed; for, as the lovely female to be drawn imperceptibly into general conversation by her companion, she displayed a quickness of perception, a severity of sentiment, and a variety and exactness of knowledge, in keeping pace with which required the exertion of every power of his mind and memory. When he observed the exquisitely delicate and expensive materials of her dress, the air of fashion, and the evidences in her language of a careful and costly education, and compared them with the poverty and proverbial ignominy of his own situation, he could have almost fancied he was in a dream, or that some superior being was drawing him from obscurity to exhibit him in an act of monstrous presumption, as a laughing-stock for the world. But this fancy was only momentary; for when, in the course of conversation, his eyes caught a glimpse of her beautiful face, he failed to discover any lurking sign of satire, derision, or condescension—she seemed

as much in earnest as himself; her countenance was as much distinguished by its artless good humour, as her language by its good breeding and good sense, and William felt that with one word of encouragement from her, he could communicate to her all those events of his life which he had hitherto kept the most secret—namely, the misfortunes of his family, and his own struggles.

But before the conversation could become of such a confidential nature as this, they had entered one of the most fashionable streets near the Regent's Park, when the lady, as though she suddenly recalled some forgotten circumstance, stopped, and wished him a good day. It was just about setting sun, and although not dark, approaching darkness emboldened the modest William to request that he might see her safe at home, in which he was actuated merely by dread or unwillingness to part from her, not once recollecting that he was taking the most effectual means of ascertaining

her address. The lady again took William's arm, and turning back from the street which they had entered, led the way to a small quiet street at the distance of a few hundred yards, when she stopped at a small tradesman's house, thanked him for his protection, and left him.

Yes, she left him, and with her it seemed that everything beautiful in the universe had disappeared. He stood for a moment bewildered, and unconscious of his locality, like a man in the momentary blindness from a lightning flash; but this bewilderment and unconsciousness as suddenly gave way before a conviction of the presence in his own structure of faculties and energies hitherto undeveloped. The most beautiful and important relation in human nature, until now hardly considered by him, was at once disclosed in all its power, and filled him with raptures almost too great for pleasure. The terms—friend, father, mother, and sister, had often kindled in his heart the joys and sorrows of affection, and with

his ardent temperament, very exquisite had they been; but until now the word *woman* had been utterly powerless, and suggestive of neither pain nor pleasure—a word indifferent as that of any other of God's creatures! but in an instant that indifference made way for an overpowering and ineffaceable conviction of the beauty and excellence of woman, and of the Divine wisdom and goodness in dividing the creature man into two beings of different sexes, as a means of a more perfect enjoyment of the happiness, and of a more assured support of the misery of human life.

There was somewhat divine in this passion—there was somewhat divine in the beautiful creature that had created it, and the very pavement of the streets seemed to have gathered somewhat of sacredness from her footsteps. He was almost chagrined that the common every-day people of the world should walk familiarly and unheedingly on ground where she had trod. During his walk homewards, he marked with

his eye the exact spot of the footway along which she had passed; and it must be confessed that every street through which they had walked together William now walked through, and the series of dirty streets and filthy alleys seemed to him the most delightful promenades under the sun.

Yes; he traced again with delight the course they had taken together, he recollected what she had said at every spot, and wherever their eyes had met; and the bare recollection was a rapture not less profound and sweet than he had felt in her presence. He went not to theatre or concert, to church or lecture that evening. He went home: but there he thought not of books, or music, or meals; he threw himself into a chair, and sat meditating until a late hour on the beautiful, the accomplished, the gentle woman whom his eyes had just carried into his heart: and when late in the evening he went to his bed-room, it was not so much to sleep as to think of the parsonage house in

Berkshire, and to draw exquisite pictures of happiness, consisting of himself preaching to a congregation of affectionate listeners, and a certain beautiful woman looking up to him from the minister's pew.

CHAPTER III.

WHATEVER may have been the sleeping or waking dreams of William Herbert respecting the beautiful lady, it will not be doubted by such of my readers as have been in love, that he did not suffer himself to indulge in them beyond office hours next morning. In fact, as the lady had half promised to call on Mr. Burgess at twelve, he was at the office a little after eight, which was an hour earlier than usual. I do not, however, intend the good-natured reader to suppose that William Herbert did his employer any extraordinary benefit by this early

attendance; for instead of sitting down at his desk to engross a bond or mortgage deed, he very foolishly spent his time in looking at his watch and up the court, though all the time he must have known that he was looking in vain.

But, whatever expecting lovers may say and swear, the foot of time, or at least the hand of the clock, does go on. The clock of a neighbouring church struck nine, and William Herbert commenced his professional labours. But never had there been less symmetry in his letters and lines, or more erasures, than now. His thoughts would not be contained in the narrow compass of that room, and though he earnestly endeavoured to fasten his attention to the common routine of copying, he found it impossible; and while he continued to write, it was with a consciousness that he occasionally mentioned, on the parchment, bright eyes, delicate fingers, and a silvery voice, in the description of the house, tenement, hereditaments, and premises therein granted, bargained, and sold.

He had not been long engaged in writing, however, when he heard a gentle rap at the door, which caused him to spring up suddenly, throw the unwiped pen on the parchment, and with a beating heart hurry to the door. He opened it, prepared to deliver his most respectful and most graceful bow: but the visitor was only an old woman bringing a clean pair of shoes for Mr. Burgess, who generally changed his feet-habiliments if he happened to walk to the office. William went back to his desk in confusion at his own folly, and endeavoured with fresh earnestness not to think on what was become inextricably involved with every motion of his mind and heart. For a short time, he wrote very sedulously to atone for his previous wandering; but the next appeal to the door drew him as hastily from his desk as before. The visitor this time was a twopenny-post man, and William was again disappointed. Afterwards a poor wretch made his appearance, evidently terrified to find himself in a lawyer's

office, who had been threatened by Mr. Burgess with an action of debt, and who brought with him a receipt for the debt on which proceedings had been taken. After these disappointments, William felt amazed at his weakness, and steadfastly determined to pay no more attention to the door until the hour appointed, the consequence of which determination was to keep his mind running continually on the lady, and to make him fancy that every noise audible in the office was the sound of her approaching feet. In this alternation of expectancy and disappointment, the morning passed away. It was a tedious time for William, so anxiously did he look for the young lady; but it was not an unpleasant time, since the mere hope of seeing her was itself full of joy.

The church clock had not struck the last stroke of twelve, when Mr. Burgess walked in, followed, after a few minutes, by the lady. William Herbert, as most young men would have done in his circumstances, had probably

determined in his own mind the double of respectful attention to the young lady adopted for the prosecution of his acquaintance with her; but when she came into the office, and stood before him in all her exquisite loveliness, his resolutions melted away, and he sat at his desk, prosecuting his labours on the parchment, without daring once to look up, after the first hurried glance at the visitor so ardently expected.

But the bashfulness or humility which prevented William from paying the lady such attentions as he could wish, such as were proper to his situation, and such as even she might expect—this bashfulness was not shared by the lady; for before she communicated her business to Mr. Burgess, she walked across to William's desk, and thanked him, in a polite and cheerful manner, for his attention on the past evening. Her way of doing this, struck William as distinguishing the gentlewoman more than all the general conversation they had had together; but, indeed, she was so very beautiful, that it is

probable he would have fancied anything she might be doing or saying *now* was more excellent than anything which was past.

This acknowledgment having been made, the lady turned to Mr. Burgess, and said—"I have called respecting an advertisement in a morning paper, which I believe was meant for me."

Mr. Burgess desired her to walk into an inner office; but she had not been there more than a few seconds when William heard the sound of violent grief, and on rushing into the inner room, beheld the young lady sinking into a chair insensible. He sprang to her side, and supported her until she revived, which was not for some minutes. He looked round to Mr. Burgess for an explanation of this scene; but the old lawyer was busily engaged in putting up some papers which it was evident the lady had seen, and William was lost in amazement. When she had revived sufficiently to be able to leave the office, Mr. Burgess gave her the parcel, and asked her where he could

meet her, to settle the business. After pausing and hesitating some time, she asked him if his office would be convenient to him for the purpose, and when he replied in the affirmative, she arose to depart. But she appeared so feeble, and uncertain of foot, that if William had never seen her before, or she had been old or ugly, he must have offered his assistance; but as it was, he offered it with such an earnest and eager solicitude, as caused Mr. Burgess to look at him in a humorous kind of wonder that made William glad to leave the office.

As they were going down the stairs, she caught the bannister suddenly in her hand, and burst afresh into tears with such violence as frightened William, who, with the feeling and earnestness of an old friend, besought her to endeavour to be more composed. In the warmth of his solicitude, and in fear lest she should fall, he threw his arm around her waist, which, although she was too much distressed to reprove him for it, afterwards caused him many

a blush. When they reached Fleet Street, a coach was readily procured, and when William had seen her safe in, he was fastening the door; but observing her fall back, he sprang in, astonished at his own boldness, and bade the man drive to Cecil Street, which was the street in which he had left her the previous evening. As soon as the coach moved, she looked up, when William apologized for the liberty he had taken, but she interrupted by saying—"You are very kind, sir," and again leaned back, weeping. William could not keep out of his heart an emotion of rapture, created by sitting at the side of the beautiful young lady: but he was not comfortable. He felt that he was intruding on the sacredness of sorrow, and although he was justified by the necessity of protection to a woman in distress, he looked anxiously for Cecil Street. At length they reached the house, when the lady left the coach, and William was driven back to the office, where he paid the driver.

Here was a sudden change in the feelings of

the young man. What! could so beautiful and excellent a creature have a cause for grief? Could she have done anything to be sorry for, or could any human being have been guilty of an action that could make her miserable? Grief and she seemed to be divided by a gulf, which it appeared a contradiction to suppose could be passed. Had he the fashioning of her fate, the choicest pleasures of this world would have been selected for her approbation, and would have been embellished by her acceptance, and loved only for her sake. Yet she was in grief. He could not understand it: but her incomprehensible misery drew closer around his heart the chain that her beauty had fastened there, since it reduced her from the exalted nature which his fancy had pictured above sympathy, and displayed the woman to be comforted and protected.

William had hitherto fulfilled all the duties of his situation to the entire satisfaction of his employer; for besides that he had a strong

sentiment of duty, he was not possessed by any passion or attached to any pursuit which could interfere with the due performance of them. His sole pursuit and passion had been his classical studies, which could be laid aside by day to be renewed with fresh life and vigour in the evening; so that the labour of the office was just as welcome to him as any other kind of sedentary manual labour to obtain bread. But now the work of the day, if it was done properly, was a disagreeable task, and the books were left untouched in the evening. He sat thinking of the beautiful creature that had passed before his eyes, and wondered that he could study no other subject.

A week passed over in this manner, whether of pain or pleasure it would be difficult to say, so mingled were anxieties and hopes in the heart of William Herbert. He began to fear that he should never see the beautiful girl any more; yet he still looked anxiously at the door at every knock; and one morning, about a week

after the first visit, he was delighted to see her enter. He was delighted at the first glance which assured him that she was present; but immediately afterwards, he was surprised and shocked at the alteration in her appearance and manners, for she was very pale and thin; she was in deep mourning, and her voice was trembling and low. When the business on which she had come had been transacted, and she had left the inner office, she went to the desk at which William was writing, and put down a sovereign, saying, "Allow me to pay you for the coach which you were so good as to order for me the other day—I forgot it then. For your other kindness I can only give you my thanks and grateful remembrance." She then turned to Mr. Burgess, and William put the sovereign in his pocket and laid the change on the desk. Before she left the office, she turned to wish William a good morning, when she saw the silver; she took it up with a smile, their eyes met, and William fancied that there was in

her glance an acknowledgment that two independent spirits had met, though, after all, she perhaps smiled at the oddity of the circumstance of a lawyer's clerk returning any money that was not legally demanded of him.

The lady went down, followed by William, who wished to be in readiness to offer his services, if necessary; but as they reached the entrance of Fleet Street, he saw a carriage attended by servants in a handsome livery waiting for her, and of course he dared not offer to attend her. He handed her into the carriage, bowed respectfully, received a graceful bow in return, and went back to the office.

That William had naturally a pretty decided tendency to the romantic, will not be doubted by such of my readers as have borne with me thus far, and this tendency had not been lessened by the circumstances of his life. This was the first time he had felt interested in a woman, and the interest was not likely to be faint. His mind was a chaos of strange ideas

and speculations regarding the visitation of this beautiful creature. He believed she was in some manner connected with his fate, and he was irresistibly impelled to discover who she was. He knew himself to be a gentleman by birth; but he knew his present situation, and dared not encourage those sweetest hopes that were so ready to spring up when he thought of the lady. The beautiful visions of happiness which would arise before his excited imagination he thrust aside as vain. Yet he had sat by her side, he had seen her weep, he had endeavoured to comfort her, his arm had trembled around her waist—she had smiled on him. The thought of these things was a treasure that could never be taken from him, and he could not bear that she who possessed such a power to charm should pass away from his sight for ever, unnamed and unknown, as a casual passer-by in the street. In short, he felt the first strong workings of that passion which ornaments the person towards whom it is directed with all the exaggerated

excellences that the excited imagination of youth can create—a passion which requires only a more intimate acquaintance with its object to dwindle into indifference, or to ripen into a strength not to be changed by all the circumstances of life.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE was not any great beauty in the outline or the details of Cecil Street; neither was there much of that hideousness admired by lovers of the picturesque, since it was one of the third-rate new streets, the best of which look about as interesting as two rows of park walls, the apple trees lining a French road, or those gardens mentioned by Pope where half the platform just reflects the other. But dull as those masses of uniform brick might be to a casual observer, not an evening passed, nor an hour in the day when William Herbert was dis-

engaged, that he did not cast his admiring eyes on it. Many hundred times did he walk up and down that street for no earthly purpose whatever, every time casting an inquisitive and furtive glance at the meanest house in it, which was the little corner shop where he had last seen the young lady. But all this watching and waiting were as purposeless, and to as little purpose, as can well be imagined; for, however improbable the assertion may appear, he did not really mean to catch a cold or to be taken up by the police, which seemed the only results likely to proceed from his conduct. He only imitated the amiable Orlando in "The Sorrows of the Heart," and a thousand other novels, who will sit on the top of a hill throughout a January night to watch the cottage a mile off, in which had disappeared his fair *incognito*.

Those veritable histories are very eloquent on the all-sufficiency of love as a diet for their heroes and heroines, perhaps because it is

fashionable and romantic to feed sparingly; but I doubt whether the finest love in the world would not soon become unfit for the sustenance of any human being if it took so little of a fattening nature as that which was now so important an article in William Herbert's daily consumption. There were no sweet words, tender looks, involuntary sighs, and gentle pressures of the hand, as an uniform dietary for his love—he had not any in his memory which could excite him with recollected joy: all this thought and feeling, and sentiment—this watching and waiting and dreaming, were for a young lady whom he had seen three times for a few minutes, whose name he did not know, whose station he could not guess at, and whose conversation had been of a nature entirely unconnected with his emotions; and sometimes, when, after a very long prowl in the neighbourhood, he returned home tired and disappointed, he was not far from being so frank with himself (a person that does not like very plain speaking) as to

hint that he was, in fact, somewhat of a block-head.

Not long after he had arrived at this satisfactory conclusion, he determined that he would call, in a friendly way of course, at the house which he had seen the young lady enter, and inquire respecting her health, which certainly could not be taken amiss, as when he last saw her, the state of her mind was such as to warrant a friendly fear. The first evening after forming this resolve, he called at the shop, and laid out a trifle, and after a good deal of conversation respecting the weather and other topics of general conversation, walked away without mentioning the subject which was nearest to his heart. Bitterly did he blame his want of courage as he walked homewards, and many a fervent determination did he form to be more courageous another time. The next night he called again, quite resolved to make the necessary inquiries; and yet, what right had he to make inquiries respecting the private affairs of the young lady?

Had she said anything that could justify him in committing her in any way? Was she a friend of his? Dare he call her an acquaintance even, who was only his master's client? What would she think of a lawyer's clerk calling to make inquiries respecting her? These thoughts passed rapidly through his mind, while he was talking to the shopkeeper, and the end of it was, that he walked away again without making any inquiry.

But there is a selfishness in all hearts, which will come into play, first or last: after allowing due weight to the feelings above mentioned and to his own desires, the latter overbalanced the other, and at length he dared to ask a single question concerning the lady. He found, as is often the case, that over-refinement is a folly, and that he had wasted a good deal of modesty: the shopkeeper knew nothing about any young lady, nor by the most elaborate description could William recall her to his memory. What a contradiction is man! When he received the reply he was actually glad that he was disappointed: it was a

relief that he was not to have an interview, which he had no excuse for requesting. But the relief which contained a disappointment could not be long a relief: the feeling which had prompted the inquiry returned in all its vigour, and the main wish of his heart became the principal object of his life—to discover the lady. There was not a district of the wonderful city which he did not perambulate; not a theatre, not a concert, which he could by any means contrive to attend, that he did not attend; and, often, when he could not afford to see the interior of a theatre or a concert-room, he stood at the door of the building, making a narrow examination of the faces of all the people who came out. But neither at theatre, concert, nor exhibition, could he find her he sought; and he began to feel—not that he must give up the pursuit, but that the pursuit was very unlikely to be successful.

After several weeks passed in this manner, he resolved to do what one would think he might

have done at first—ask Mr. Burgess, in an indifferent manner, for some information respecting his client. The only reason why he had not done so before was, that from his knowledge of Mr. Burgess's character, he feared that no good would come of it. But as he could not possibly be further from obtaining his object than he was now, he at length made up his mind to it; and one day, when that gentleman appeared to be in a tolerably good humour, he said, after properly introducing the subject—"The young lady seemed very much distressed, sir."

"Very," replied Mr. Burgess.

"I hope her misfortune was not of a very serious nature, sir," said William.

"I hope not," quoth Mr. Burgess.

There was very little information obtained so far, and William was obliged to come closer to the point.

"Pray, sir," said he, "does the young lady live in this neighbourhood?"

"I believe not," was the reply.

"Perhaps, sir, you could communicate her address to me."

"Oh, certainly, as well as I can, if you will acquaint me with your reason for requiring it."

"Why, sir, I—I have very strong reasons—but, really—in short, sir, I wish to see the lady on particular business."

"Pray, sir, does this particular business relate to anything which took place before or after she was at this office? Nay, Mr. Herbert, I see that you have no answer ready, and you know my mode of doing business too well to suppose that I shall compromise my client in any way. My time and my talents are my clients' when they are required; but I never thrust myself on them, and I never interfere with them, unless I have received instructions, or am quite sure that I can be of essential service to them."

"You mistake me, sir."

"No, Mr. Herbert, I understand you per-

fectly well. I should be very happy to oblige you in any reasonable request that did not interfere with my mode of doing business: I am not insensible to your merits. I have often told you that a great mischief in our profession is the almost universal ignorance of practitioners. The profession is looked on, not as an employment for the intellect, or a subject on which knowledge and learning may be exercised, but as a means of making money. To nine-tenths of the profession a case which requires the least proportion of information beyond the plodding routine, is a case which we are utterly unable to deal with; we cannot even read the laws which apply to it, and we take opinions of counsel, who perhaps know little more, and actually go to trial, day after day, when a fair amount of education would save our clients' and not lessen our own costs. I have told you, that in this respect I value you, because, by your own studies, you have gone through works, and cited cases and laws, which were beyond

my power of deciphering; but you see, after all, a man's bread and cheese are the principal things for him to look to. My way of practice may not be the best, but I have made thirty thousand pounds by it, and I can't alter it now. Many years ago I made up my mind never to betray a client directly or indirectly, and I will not do it now."

"But, sir——"

"But, Mr. Herbert, though I allow you to be a better classic than I am, you shall allow me to say that I can read you quite as well as you can me. We have all been young at some time or other—I have myself; and I'll do for you all I can. 'Tis against my plan of doing business to give you an introduction to this young lady; but I'll give you an excuse for introducing yourself when you meet her. I have some documents belonging to her, which she was to call or send for when she required them, and I am surprised that they have not been required before now. If you can't wait till they are sent

for—if your business is very pressing, you may deliver them yourself as soon as you like, since the few arrangements I had to make respecting them are quite completed."

William thanked his employer for this favour, and the conversation dropped.

When Mr. Burgess's usual business-hours were over, he arose to leave the office. He had wished his clerk a good day, had even closed the door, and was going down, when William went to the head of the stairs, and said—"Excuse me, Mr. Burgess—a—a—I believe, sir, you have forgotten the papers you mentioned."

"I see that I may get old, and lose my memory as soon as I like, while I have you to depend on," Mr. Burgess said, laughing. "But, my good fellow, I can't let my client's papers go out of my own hands, even into those of such a trustworthy clerk as you. No, no; gain the lady's permission to receive them, and they shall be entirely at your service."

There was an expression of mischievous pleasantry in Mr. Burgess's countenance, which put William to the blush, and sent him back to his desk with considerable precipitation.

CHAPTER V.

William Herbert had now gained one point, and anything that tended to accomplish his object was of great importance—of great importance, I mean, to his own feelings, by nourishing a hope: for as to any real importance, nothing could be imagined to possess less; since, though it gave him an excuse for seeking the young lady, it had no tendency whatever to accomplish the object of greater importance still, —namely, to find her. He called once more at Cecil-street, and this time fancied the tradesman was somewhat confused in denying the address

of the young lady; he, however, left his own private address with him, hinting, at the same time, the nature of his business, and saying that it could not be properly done without a personal interview. After this, William renewed his search through the city, in all places of amusement. Every theatre, every concert, every exhibition, into which he could contrive to purchase admission, he attended—every popular preacher he sat under—every nine days' wonder, for great people and small ones, he wondered at like the rest, in hopes that one face in one of the crowds, profane or sacred, might be the one he sought. It happened, however, to him, as it has often happened to better and cleverer men, that the more he sought the more he could not find, and that he had no success until he had ceased to deserve it. After several weeks, passed in the search above described, and when he had given up all expectation of accomplishing what he had so much at heart, he was walking, on a Sunday afternoon, in

Hyde Park, as the most accessible bit of ground that could remind him of green fields, and thinking of a passage in Homer, a dog at Alwerley, or a brief in the office, when he ran against a person, who, on looking up, he found to be her he had so long and so earnestly sought. There is no kind of introduction so convenient to modest folks as an unexpected one, when they are thrown in each other's face, and are compelled to talk naturally. All the embarrassment of getting into audible words the pretty speech previously concocted for the occasion, of putting into action the polite and respectful bow predetermined and prepared, and the gradual approach from distant awe to respectful familiarity, are done away, and nine times out of ten, the most modest of men in such circumstances might be taken for a blackleg or even a methodist parson by his assurance.

On this occasion, however, there was as little of an awful nature as could well be imagined. The lady was in a plain black dress, her face

covered with a veil of the same hue, so that neither richness of garment nor brilliance of beauty tended to overpower the presence of mind of our young gentleman. The young lady was in appearance as quiet and simple a person as one would meet with on a winter's day, and William could have written a satire on his former modesty. Besides, the lady had no attendant—she was walking by herself, on a Sunday afternoon, in the Park, and therefore could not be a lady of fashion or fortune: that was beyond a question, and undoubtedly that consideration gave a certain degree of freedom and confidence to his language. A conversation was gradually established between them, which lasted so long, that they actually traversed the park two or three times, and it was only as it was getting dark that William recollected the search he had made for her, and informed her that he wished to see her on particular business from Mr. Burgess. The young lady paused awhile at this request, and at length appointed to meet him at the house in Cecil-street.

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What William supposed the young lady to be is not to be told; perhaps he never thought about it. With her polished manners and refined conversation, which contained frequent incidental proofs of education and accomplishment, it was undoubtedly pleasant to be able to judge from other things, such as her unattended walk and the plainness of her dress, that she was not in the exalted sphere of life which he had supposed. But as he was congratulating himself on this point, they passed through one of the park gates, and he was driven back again to his conjectures, for the lady got into a carriage which was waiting for her, attended by two footmen in a rich though plain livery, and he fancied as it drove off that he discerned a coronet on the panels.

On the appointed evening, William, having obtained the papers, bent his way towards Cecil Street, and on his entrance was at once taken up to a little front sitting-room on the first-floor. The lady was not in the room, and considering the circumstances, it was not strange that he

looked about him rather inquisitively. The room was decently furnished, but from the absence of the trinkets and implements of industrious idleness generally found in a modern lady's room, he judged that this was not the residence of the unknown lady. The only evidence of woman's presence was a pair of gloves of the very smallest size and most delicate proportions, which, as William bent over, speculating on the fair hands which had moulded them into that graceful outline, he found were lying on a richly-bound volume of similar fairy-like dimensions. With as much awe as a votary would touch the hem of a favourite saint's garment, as gently as though there were something ethereal, which the touch of a mortal would sully, he laid the gloves aside and took up the volume, which he found to be Tasso. It was not a very recondite author, to be sure; and the presence of "La Gerusalemme" was not proof of a very high state of cultivation; but William was better pleased to see such a work than he would

have been to see a newspaper, a novel, or a magazine of fashion, which it was a thousand to one would have been the literary food selected by a lady. It was a very favourite author of William, yet he did not turn to any of the celebrated passages, the Christian lovers, the death of Clorinda, the flight of Erminia, or the submission of Armida. He did not even turn, like a true Bibliophilus, to the title-page; the fly-leaf was more interesting to him than all the written poetry in the world, for on it were the words, in a small, delicate hand, "Mary Walton."

While he was yet perusing that charming page, the lady entered from an inner-room. She was still in mourning, and rather pale; and though she did not seem like one of that numerous body of people who parade their griefs to obtain pity and condolence from charity and hypocrisy, there was a visible compression of her beautiful but tremulous lips, and an unsteadiness of the muscles of her cheeks

which appeared to be caused by a struggle against some kind of pain. As she came forward to the middle of the room, she said—

"I must apologize to you, sir, for troubling you to meet me here instead of at my own house; but circumstances important to me are the cause of it."

William bowed in silence: his heart was too much engaged to allow him to utter any of the commonplaces which most gentlemen would consider her remark called for.

"You have business with me, sir, I believe," she continued.

William had forgotten everything besides her; but he now took out the sealed packet and gave it to her. He chanced to look in her face as she received it, and observed that she was exceedingly agitated; she seemed to endeavour to speak, and failed; she then turned away, and went into the inner room. After a few minutes she returned, seemingly more composed, saying, as she sat down—"You will, I am sure, excuse

the emotion you have witnessed, and the fear of which has prevented my calling at your office instead of troubling you. I do not like a public show of grief, but I have lost a dear relation, and have never yet been obliged to conceal my feelings."

"Do not apologize to me, I pray," said William; "your sorrow cannot take a form in which I have not had to bear it. I have lost the best of fathers, and his death has been the utter ruin of every one I love. Yet—if I might say——"

"Pray continue," said the lady, as William hesitated.

"Pardon my boldness, madam, in suggesting consolation; but I would say, that the grief which we feel for the dead is the least bitter of all human sorrows. It is not hopeless grief; nor, rightly considered, should the most violent grief last long, because one human being, however dear, has undergone the change inevitable to all. No friend or relation was ever dearer

than my father to me—no one ever deserved to be; and yet, if by one word I could call him back, to live such a life as mine has been, I would not utter that word. Recollect, madam, the pains, the anxieties, the troubles which your relative had to endure on earth, and consider, that if he died a Christian, he has escaped them all for ever. He will never mourn again, either for himself or for others. Considered thus, the death of a good man is not a subject painful to the truest love; we cannot mourn long for him; and if we can say that we never wilfully gave him pain or grief, the sorrow which it is natural to feel at first, will soon change into a regret not altogether unpleasing. There is no lasting sorrow, save what we feel for ourselves."

William stopped abruptly, for, to his great surprise, the young lady burst into tears, and left the room.

When she returned, she said, with a faint smile—"Philosophy is an excellent remedy for theoretical grief; it is very consoling when we

are cool enough to consider it properly; but the very grounds on which it offers consolation, suggest reasons for grief to those suffering from a recent calamity. I believe, sir, your friend or partner has no further business with me?"

"Mr. Burgess," replied William, "has no more papers belonging to you; but I am not Mr. Burgess's friend or partner—I am his clerk."

The young lady looked at him a moment, with a little embarrassment, when she said—

"Excuse me, if I remind you of any subject that may give you pain; but I have remarked several indirect allusions in your conversation to scenes and circumstances which seem not altogether consonant with your present situation. I fear that some serious adversities have befallen you; and I should be obliged by your communicating them to me, if they are not connected with anything peculiarly painful to yourself. I do not ask from idle curiosity; I am under very great obligations to you for protection and sympathy

in unexpected distress, and should be very happy to assist, so far as it is in my power, in any plans which you may have formed for your advantage."

This was the first downright offer of assistance which William Herbert had ever received, and it sounded very sweet in his ears—the more so, perhaps, for its novelty. It was pleasant to know that there was one person in the world who would do from philanthropy what bishops, and baronets, and squires would not do from friendship and gratitude. A voice like that of a friend was a voice of hope amid the distresses of his fortune; it seemed to say, that he had still a dependence on the earth. Yet the pleasure the young lady's offer gave was the only benefit he derived from it, for he felt an insurmountable repugnance to the very idea of being rewarded by her in money for that attention which had produced in his heart such a flood of new and delightful emotions. Yet, while he declined the offer, he could not bring himself to

refuse the confidence which was asked in so sweet and gentle a tone; he had never related the fall of his family from affluence and happiness to poverty and misery with the view of obtaining direct pecuniary aid; it seemed a prostitution of the inflictions of Providence, to make them the means of procuring human charity. But when the creature before him, so beautiful, so frank, so gentle, and, more than all, so dear, appeared to wish to know something of his former life, he could not bring himself to refuse—it seemed like an unbosoming himself to an old and cherished friend; and perhaps he was not sorry to prove to her that he had been destined to be something rather superior to a lawyer's clerk. He accordingly gave the young lady a short sketch of the adventures related in the foregoing volumes, from his birth down to the rescue of old Mr. Benson from the hands of ruffians, which had brought him into the service of Mr. Burgess.

He had not to complain of an uninterested

listener, or of one incapable of comprehending his feelings. The several instances he cited of the devotedness of each member of his family to the general interest, excited her very powerfully; and as he related his own adventure in the unoccupied house, and the danger of that weak old man, her own fear, and pity, and sorrow, seemed in direct proportion to the circumstances of the narrative, and when it was concluded, she arose and turned away her face, as though to conceal from him the impression it had made. William also arose; for, though the foregoing interview was not so long as this description of it, he felt that he had no excuse for prolonging his stay. Yet he hesitated to leave the house so utterly ignorant of everything regarding the young lady. Hardly conscious of what he did, he took up the Tasso, and opening it at the name, he said, as the lady turned towards him—"Pardon me, ma'am, there is a name in this book—may I inquire——"

"That is my name," she said. After a

momentary pause, she continued, with an expression of the most charming hesitation—"You have spoken of the events of your life as a man of sense and a gentleman should do, without querulous regrets to excite pity, which, to a mind that possesses any energy, is another name for insult, I can enter into your feelings; but I do not greatly commiserate you, or any one, for a mere change in worldly prosperity. There is frequently a cloud in the brightest lot; but a man cannot be very unhappy long, if he constantly observes that his happiness depends on the uprightness of his own heart. But, sir, I can readily comprehend how the misfortunes of your life may affect your tastes and pleasures, to say nothing of the more important pursuits of life. For instance, I can imagine the want of books, especially of the newer ones, may be much regretted. Now, sir, I have the command of a considerable library, and if you will favour me with a list of those that would be most useful to you, I shall be

happy to select them, and you can exchange them as often as you like. I shall be sorry if you refuse me this very inadequate testimonial of my gratitude."

This was an offer more acceptable to William than any other could be, since it not only supplied a want which he daily lamented, but it gave him a chance of seeing Miss Walton again, which, a minute before, he thought hopeless, as he was unable to form any kind of excuse for requesting it, or to contrive any plan for effecting it. He accepted the offer with the greatest readiness, and made out a list of works he was unable to purchase, which Miss Walton promised should be left with the master of the house, in the course of the next week. She offered her hand, he took it respectfully, and withdrew.

CHAPTER VI.

I SHALL not pretend to describe William Herbert's feelings through the remainder of the week; for the person who has never loved would not comprehend them, while he that has requires not the description. As Miss Walton had mentioned that William was to call in the course of the next week, it is not to be wondered at that he took the first day—namely, Monday. Fortune was better to him than his hopes; for, on inquiring of the tradesman whether he had been inquired for, he found that Miss Walton was up stairs. As a matter

of course, he sent up his name, and, to his great delight, was shortly invited to follow it. The gentleman and the lady were both somewhat confused at the unexpected meeting, as it had been unthought of on both sides. William found the books ready for him; and his thanks for them, and the subjects of some of them, led to another conversation, which neither of them seemed in a hurry to conclude; for William, freed from his original bashfulness, and talking to a person whom he esteemed, really shone in conversation, and whatever Miss Walton said was interesting to him on account of the feeling with which he received it. There happened to be an old piano in the room, such as is seen in every tradesman's house after his daughter has taken a quarter's lessons, half the strings of which are broken, and the remainder a tone and a half below concert pitch. But the piano, though useless for playing, was a very good instrument to be talked about, and led to a pretty animated conversation on music,

in the course of which William went so far as to express a wish to hear Miss Walton play, and was not refused.

"I cannot expect to give you much pleasure by my 'playing,' she said; "but I sometimes touch the harp a little, and if at any time, when you are disengaged, you wish to hear a little music such as I can I will give you."

A request leading to such an answer is pretty strong proof that Mr. Herbert had lost somewhat of that awful modesty which had formerly oppressed him. In fact, they had met five times, and each time conversed pretty freely, and bashfulness must be inveterate indeed that would be proof against that. William expressed his thanks, in the most earnest terms, for an offer which promised so much pleasure. "But," said he, "I believe, Miss Walton, that this is not your residence, and I might not be so fortunate as to meet you when I call. After the opinions which I have heard you utter, I am not ashamed to say that my time is not my

own in the day-time; should I presume too far if I asked you to—to—name——"

"To fix a day, you mean," she replied; "you would like some fresh books, perhaps, in the course of a week. About this time, this day week, you may call, when I will be here, or will appoint a day."

That day week another meeting! What a condition of life was his during those seven days! Books!—what charm could there be in the very best edition of Aristophanes or Æschylus to a man who was thinking of a meeting with the woman he loved? What a long feast of pleasure did he make on the materials his heart had brought away from that last interview! That he had sat in familiar conversation with the loveliest, the best, the most accomplished, the dearest of human beings—that he was engaged to meet her again, were things so utterly beyond all he had hoped, that he appeared to be in a dream of exquisite pleasure, in which all the faculties of the mind and of the

body were absorbed by a confused and indefinable sense of delight.

On the appointed evening William was ready at least two hours too soon. Never were there two such long hours—do what he could, they would not wear away. A dozen times did he believe that his watch had stopped, and as many times did he examine the church clocks as he walked rapidly through the streets to cheat time. After all, he was a quarter of an hour before the appointed time, when he rapped at the tradesman's private door; but there was no harm done—the lady was there. As he ascended the stairs, he heard the sound of music, which, deadened by the closed door and distance, was mellowed into a faint body of sound of exceeding sweetness. He stopped involuntarily, from a recollection of Alverley, where he had so often heard his mother's music as he ran up the stairs to the drawing-room. He was recalled to himself by the servant opening the door, when he walked up, and entered the room on

tip-toe, as though afraid to lose one of the precious tones. The lady's back was towards him, and as he walked, or rather glided, near her, she continued to play without noticing him. The piece was "The Invocation to Sleep," in Handel's Semele. She played the accompaniments very slow, so that there was no room for a display of execution; but he was astonished at the richness and pathos of her voice. He could not help thinking that the complaint of the singer was direct from a human heart, rather than from the tutored skill of an artist. He felt that music could not be more intelligible if Heaven had given a mortal the power of song, as a recompence for the loss of speech. The harp, an exceeding rich one, was not drawn towards her in the usual manner; but she was bending forward, and leaning her head on its side, her dark unconfined tresses hanging down about the gilded shaft, and playing among the shivering strings,—she seemed like a Cecilia, musing or preluding before a burst of sublime music. But

her pure white hands turning into a thousand shapes of dimpled loveliness, as they caught the various chords; the swelling arms shining out bright through the black lace of her sleeves; the neck, the gentle undulations of whose snowy beauty declared the presence of a heart which beat beneath it responsive to the music, declared that it was no goddess or saint, but a dear woman who was before him; and, perhaps, it was as much the physical beauty of the woman, as the charm of the music, that made him cry—"Beautiful! beautiful!" and startle the lady from her thoughtful posture.

William felt the necessity for an apology: "Excuse my exclamation," he said, "I was not aware, when I entered, that the servant had not announced me, and I could not interrupt such music as that."

"The instrument is, indeed, a very good one," said she; "but, perhaps, I ought not to play anything besides lessons, until I have had more practice."

"What!" cried William, "can any music exceed what I have heard?"

"You are laughing at me, I am sure," said she. "I was not playing, any more than you are talking when you are muttering a few thoughts to yourself." As she said this, she pointed to a chair for William, and drew the harp against her bosom. She began a plaintive Scotch air, which seemed framed to be sung by a heart-whole maiden, sitting at her mother's feet in innocence and joy. Then insensibly the chords grew fuller, and the melody lost its plaintive character till it changed gradually into a military march which introduced the tumult and the trouble of a battle-field; but in the very swelling crash of triumph there was audible a snatch of the simple Scotch air like the voice of a maiden seeking her beloved among the heaps of the dead; then it fell into a minor key of thrilling cords, so piercing, yet so gentle, it seemed like a dying chorus sung in the composed and hopeless grief of broken hearts.

When she stopped, William uttered not a word of applause. He had looked on her as long as he dared, and then bent forward on the table and covered his face. She began a livelier tune, but as her hands grew unsteady in the midst of it, he looked up; she had not observed him move, and was wiping her eyes with one hand, while she continued to play with the other.

After a time Miss Walton put back her harp, and said, pleasantly—"If I were inclined to be vain of what little I know of music, the praise which your silence gives me would be a sufficient excuse; for if you thought I played very badly, you would say some civil thing respecting my masters, and the excellence of abundant practice."

"I was thinking of my daily occupations, and comparing them with a life spent in this manner. I shall never forget this evening," said William.

"You have not been accustomed to music

lately," replied Miss Walton, smiling. "But with so great a love for the science you probably are a master. I am not so generous as to overlook my own gratification when I grant a favour: here are some duets. Will you take a part?

William fixed his eyes resolutely on the music-book, that her beauty might not disturb him, and sang. His lungs had never been so affected before—neither notes nor words came freely; yet he had never been so happy. He was standing by her who had created in his heart such a world of new and unspeakable delight: he could not but perceive at times the beauty of the figure at his side—the most beautiful object that ever meets the eye of man—a virgin, in whose bright cheeks and heavenly eyes you discern the innocence and happiness of childhood, and in whose voluptuous form you cannot but discern the capabilities of the glorious passion of a woman. He saw this—he felt it. Sometimes in the course of turning the leaves,

his hand touched hers—the touch gentle and soft as the falling of a rose-leaf pierced to his very heart like an arrow—but like an arrow giving life, not death.

Several hours had thus passed, when William was unpleasantly surprised to hear a neighbouring clock strike a rather late hour. He arose to depart, and was beginning to express his thanks for the pleasure he had received, when she pleasantly assured him that the obligation was mutual, as if she had played to him he had sung to her. She rang for refreshment, and though he declined taking them, and had his hat in his hand, the offer drew them into another conversation which lasted till the clock struck again. At length, really ashamed of his long stay, he was going to the door resolutely, when the lady said, "I fear I shall lie under your hard opinion after this meeting."

"I shall remember your—may I say kindness?—as long as I live," said William.

"But you know, sir, it is not usual to meet

in this manner; and though any pleasure which you may have received make you forget it now, when that pleasure shall have passed away, you will remember me as I wish not to be remembered."

"How can I ever remember you but with gratitude—gratitude so deep that I would rather sacrifice this greatest enjoyment of life, than that you should have cause to fear."

"I must say for myself, Mr. Herbert," the lady replied, "that I acted without much consideration; but I had that confidence in the integrity—I may say in the naturalness of your heart—that I did not fear you would misunderstand me. You shewed feeling for me when I was distressed, which is not always found, and I believed that I was safe with him who shewed it."

William bowed, pressed her offered hand, and went home.

CHAPTER VII.

In the meetings just described, William was not very forcibly struck with the originality of Miss Walton's remarks, as they were derived rather from books than from experience. He was beginning to set rather less value than formerly on the morals and disquisitions of books; he had discovered the vast use of worldly knowledge to every one who must struggle in the world, and was perfectly convinced that this knowledge was compatible with virtue. His experience in a lawyer's office had been of immense importance to him in this respect; the

very perusal of an Act, with its thousands of cautions against offenders, was sufficient to teach him a good deal of the nature of men; and the personal intercourse with clients, and observations of Mr. Burgess's intercourse with them, opened his eyes to points of human character that he had not dreamed of before. He would not now have believed a man must be good because it was in print. He therefore felt a kind of superiority over Miss Walton, who seemed very ignorant of the ways of the world, and to have had little acquaintance with contemporaneous society. Her opinions regarded more the human heart and society in the abstract—her knowledge appeared to be gathered from books rather than from men, and her sentiments to be produced from reflection on the observations of others rather than her own. If any of her sentiments could be combated, none could be condemned; for if they were not just, in the fullest sense, they were, like those of a child, founded on a first view of circumstances;

and there was a freshness and openness in her remarks, an absence of affectation and arrogance, and a desire for knowledge, which gave an inexpressible charm to her conversation.

But as they met again and again, there was something that drew him closer to her than all those things together—it was her affectionate behaviour to him. This, perhaps, she did not intend, and certainly he did not perceive it; yet it was so, and it produced a powerful effect. Their intercourse seemed a drawing together of two hearts, which were yet in the simplicity of nature, having gathered neither the blessings nor the curses of social life.

After meeting Miss Walton three or four consecutive nights, he stayed away once, fearing that he might weary her by his frequent visits; but when he went the next night, she was not there. He called again on the following night, and had not the bashfulness of a youthful passion blinded him, he might have seen that the welcome he received was a very

sincere one. She was playing when he entered, but she sprung up when she saw him, and offered her hand, while a light spreading over her whole countenance expressed an unbounded pleasure. After the first salutation, she said—"I expected you the night before last; yet I know not why, as you gave me no promise; and business must be attended to before amusement."

"I had no business," said William, "but I thought—I feared, you might consider I troubled you too often."

Miss Walton blushed, as she replied, in a hesitating manner—"You have found me tolerably frank; and if I had thought as you imagined, I should have told you. You do not compliment a woman by avoiding her."

"I have spent here," said William, "the most delightful hours of my life; I would they might last as long as I live, if they do not weary you."

"Well, sir," Miss Walton replied, "I came this evening to remove my harp—I suppose, I

must let it remain a little longer. What shall I play?"

No appointment was made, yet so it happened, they met every night for some time, and each time was William more eager to meet the young lady than before. He was never tired of listening, as she was never tired of playing. But the evenings were not consumed by music alone. They sat, side by side, on the sofa, reading together, and making remarks on what they read, without bashfulness as without arrogance, but with the familiar openness of brother and sister. This led to pleasant disputes, and William, in the heat of argument, could take her hand, and she could allow it to remain in his without that trembling passion which had formerly overpowered him.

She was at times full of spirits, the happiest creature under the sun—the flashes of her wit created many a smile; yet he felt there was something not right, which he was unacquainted with. Sometimes he read while she played,

and several times, when he looked up, he met her face turned towards his, with an expression of sorrow that struck him to the heart—it seemed the expression of despair. Often he fancied he saw her dash a tear from her eyes, when she believed herself unnoticed; yet when he went to her and spoke, he doubted the truth of his observation, for she was again the lively, witty, heart-whole woman.

"This changeableness of her feelings drew his heart yet closer to her. He could not doubt but that she had some secret unhappiness; and how and why she cast it off in his presence was a mystery that interested him, if it did not lead him to increased watchfulness to endeavour to comprehend it. But why give a host of reasons for what is so easily accounted for? He was young, solitary, and ardent? He was in daily intercourse with a woman whose beauty appealed to his senses, whose accomplishments appealed to his mind, and whose delicacy and purity appealed to his heart. He

resigned his soul to the passion which had made him incapable of resisting, before he had acknowledged its presence; and when he did recognise it, and feared that its termination would not be happiness for him, he would not have resigned the new feeling if it had been in his power. He could not have bought absence from its pains by the sacrifice of its pleasures. He thought not of a separation—he shut his eyes to the future—day passed like a dream; in the evening he hurried to Cecil Street, to meet her who made earth all that could be imagined of heaven.

And she—what did she feel? He knew not what he wished—whether he would be loved by her or no—considering his own situation in the world; but he felt that to be loved by such a creature as that, would undoubtedly be unspeakable and unimaginable bliss. He trembled with delight when he thought of its possibility. But if he could have exercised the calm observation of an indifferent spectator, he might have seen something in her blushing cheeks, her downcast

eyes, the melting tones of her voice, and the irrepressible eagerness of her manner when anything ailed him, that would have assured him of something more than the future possibility.

But the violent passion which, at first, her loveliness inspired, gave way: he grew accustomed to her beauty, and more narrowly examined her mind; and as she poured forth, with an almost infantine simplicity and openness, the pure and lofty sentiments which filled it, the angel disappeared; but he felt that he could kneel down and worship the dear woman at his side. When I say that the angel disappeared, I do not mean that she was lowered one degree in his estimation; but that his mind had somewhat cleared itself of the exaggerated admiration and humility, which had made him for awhile look on a handsome woman as something too sublime for any feeling but adoration, and now, without losing an atom of respect for her, he could look on her as a woman

created to make the happiness of a man—a woman to be sought, to be wooed, to be won.

And was not she a human being, and young? Did she not also possess passions? What were her feelings towards him? When their eyes met in conversation, was there no confession made in the confusion with which she turned aside, or bent her head to hide the blushes that were ever ready to overflow her face?

in this manner; and though any pleasure which you may have received make you forget it now, when that pleasure shall have passed away, you will remember me as I wish not to be remembered."

"How can I ever remember you but with gratitude—gratitude so deep that I would rather sacrifice this greatest enjoyment of life, than that you should have cause to fear."

"I must say for myself, Mr. Herbert," the lady replied, "that I acted without much consideration; but I had that confidence in the integrity—I may say in the naturalness of your heart—that I did not fear you would misunderstand me. You shewed feeling for me when I was distressed, which is not always found, and I believed that I was safe with him who shewed it."

William bowed, pressed her offered hand, and went home.

but had quietly indulged his feelings as a member of a large family is fondly attached to every individual, without allowing the love due to one to interfere with that which he feels for the rest.

But even if the most primitive of his affections were in danger of wearing away under the influence of a new and most absorbing passion, it was not to be without making an appeal to his heart. A misfortune, as unexpected as astounding, befell his mother. The cottage—an old house, composed principally of wood, accidentally caught fire, and burnt in a few minutes to the ground, destroying everything it contained save the two inmates. The grief and alarm which overpowered William on learning this, were too great to arise in a heart devoted exclusively to one passion — in the youngest days of filial reverence he could not have felt more acutely; he longed to start immediately for Burnside, and, which may appear very strange, actually forgot at first that he should be expected that evening in Cecil Street.

But his uneasiness was to be even greater than this misfortune alone could have caused: having been from home through the earlier part of the day, it was not till several hours after noon that he received the letter announcing the misfortune, when the coaches were all gone, and he was compelled, in spite of his anxiety, to wait until an early hour the next morning, being too poor to travel post, and too well acquainted with his own powers to attempt a walk of a hundred miles, which was about the distance to Burnside.

But the time between the general announcement and the expected relation of particulars, is the most difficult part of a calamity to support in patience. The thronging ideas of his mother's distress were too painful to allow him to wait inactive till the next morning; and he suddenly started off to Brentham Park, to make his sister a partner of his journey, knowing that he could offer no sweeter consolation to his mother in any distress, than the presence of her children.



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sons he loved was beyond the reach of the common casualties of life; and much as he loved mother and sister, he probably would not have believed their distresses at the expense of a single comfort belonging to the newer friend, whose only tie to him was one which the heart had created. But, however he might rejoice in the prosperity of Miss Walton, neither that, nor her music, nor her presence, nor her brilliant conversation, nor her more brilliant beauty, nor love itself, was sufficient to make him entirely forgetful of the unfortunate situation of his relatives. That thought would intrude; and though he occasionally lent a ready ear to the sweet sounds, and gave a spirited reply to her lively sayings, he was at times overcome by a vision of those beloved ones who, probably without a home, if not without food, were looking with anxious hearts and sleepless eyes for his coming. The course of such thoughts made him, at times, indifferent to what was passing immediately around him, and he sank into

silence. But he was in the presence of one whose power of observation was not very confined, and when he had twice replied to her remarks, in the manner of a person preoccupied by another subject, she observed the alteration; and, after looking anxiously at him for a few seconds, put back her harp, and sat down by him, saying, with a very serious countenance—"Mr. Herbert, excuse me, I fear something has happened to you."

"Nothing to me," he replied; "but a heavy misfortune has befallen my mother. I am sorry that my behaviour has been affected by it, and, indeed, I should not have intruded on you in the present state of my mind, but that I shall leave London this night, for an uncertain period; and I thought—pardon my boldness, Miss Walton, I am forced to be sincere at such a time as this—I thought you might, perhaps, feel some surprise at my absence."

"You do me injustice," said Miss Walton, in a gentle and humble tone—"you do me injustice

in saying that you would have stayed away from my house because you are in trouble. Surely, Mr. Herbert, you consider me your friend in good wishes and sympathy, at least, if it may not be in my power to render you any substantial services. I am sure I consider you as a friend, and your sympathy would be felt by me as a consolation. You pay me a very poor compliment in professing yourself my friend only when everything goes well with you, and leaving me when the most valuable offices of friendship are to be rendered."

"However you may reprove my manners," said William, "you could not reprove the feelings which prompted them. I can truly say, Miss Walton, that a word of hope or of comfort from you, is more powerful than all other words from mortal lips. I can say but little of friendship—I have no friends besides you and my two poor relatives; yet I believe that if I had a thousand, to no one of them should I so confidently fly as to you for advice

or for consolation; and believe, if I seemed backward in communicating to you the misfortune which was so painful to myself, it was from a profound sense of your desert — you ought not to know sorrow — you ought to be always brilliant and cheerful; the sunshine is the element for you. I was unwilling to let even the shadow of my ill-fortune fall on you."

"A person who has not had sorrow of his own, is unqualified to be the friend of a person liable to sorrow; but, Mr. Herbert, I am not such a one, I am thoroughly conversant with misery; there is no overflowing merriment in my heart to prevent its taking the tone of a suffering friend. May I be made acquainted with the misfortune which has befallen you?"

"My mother's house is burnt to the ground, and probably all the little property she possessed in the world; and, what is worse, she is ill. I am grateful to you for your assurances of sympathy, they are inexpressibly valuable; yet,

even after what you have said, I still apologize for mentioning these circumstances, for besides I expect you to be concerned for the distress of a lady you never saw, or to understand my dismay at the destruction of a little cottage, the value of which and all it contained is probably less than the property belonging to you in this room? But those things are of the last importance to me, for that lady is my most dearly beloved mother, and that cottage was all that stood between her and absolute starvation."

"You form too high an opinion of my ideas," replied Miss Walton, "and my feelings as a friend are in proportion to my friend's feelings, not in proportion to my own estimate of the cause of them."

Miss Walton arose as she said this, and walked across the room several times without speaking; when, at length, stopping opposite to William, with a slight blush, and some little hesitation, she said—

"Mr. Herbert, there would be little good sense

in our talking about friendship, if, from false delicacy, or any other conventional folly, we declined to offer or to accept the active services of a friend. In some circumstances I might apologize for the liberty I am about to take—on your account, not on my own. My situation absolves me from the prejudices of society, and yours is not far different, saving that you have two relations who are all that you love in the world, and for whose sake you ought to discard the little prejudices that a man may indulge, when he has a world of friends and equals around him whom he must please. Excuse this preamble. It would be folly in me to pretend not to suppose that the calamity which has befallen your mother may be a very serious pecuniary evil, to say nothing of illness, which makes poverty most to be dreaded. Now, Mr. Herbert, we are friends —are we not?"

As she said this, she put one of her hands in his, and continued, in a beseeching manner—

"It is in my power to assist you in this without

the least sacrifice to myself, I should be most proud to aid you in comforting a lady whom, from your own report, I value so highly; you would make me very happy by allowing me to repair, so far as money can do it, the misfortune which so oppresses you."

There was something not pleasant in an offer of money which had not been earned, and William looked into Miss Walton's face, as though to observe, by its expression, whether the offer had been suggested by an apparent willingness to accept, in anything he had said; but the quiet and modest friendliness of her countenance reassured him, and, pressing the beautiful hand which lay in his, he said—

"I am unused to offers of this kind; the few requests I have made to old friends for the assistance of their interest, were invariably refused after I became poor, and I own that I am become averse to ask or to accept favours. But my poor mother and sister!—I do not think I could refuse a benefit for them. I have no right to

act for them in such a case—at least, before I have seen them; but if, when I see them, I am certain that they are in such a situation as my fears suggest, I will mention your offer to them, and if you will allow me to introduce them to you, I shall be happy for you to arrange it as you may agree on; and, certainly, I would rather have to be grateful to you than to any other person in the world."

Miss Walton's face grew pale and red, alternately, as William was speaking, and before he had concluded, she disengaged her hand, and walked away. She walked with an averted face for a minute or two, and when she turned to speak, there were tears in her eyes.

"I am sorry—very sorry," she said, "to decline the kind offer you have made me; but—but, Mr. Herbert, I cannot be introduced to your mother and sister."

"I do not ask you to permit them to call on you at your own home; I do not expect you to make them your avowed friends," William replied.

They would be happy to accompany me there, for my sake; they would not give you trouble. They have learned humility, and in their present situation they would not expect you to associate with them: they know well the difference between what they have been and what they are. But, however low they may be, Miss Walton, I am sure you would find them women of education and refinement, and though I do not pretend that their talents and acquirements equal those which have astonished me in this room, I am confident that you would find nothing in them which may not be either admired or loved."

"I wish, Mr. Herbert," replied Miss Walton, in confusion—"I wish I could prevail on you to think of me more like a man of the world. I can scarcely believe that your humility is not assumed. Pray address me as a common human creature, without compliment and without deference. Be assured that my respect for your mother and sister is as great as one human being

can feel towards another; it would not be less evil if they were of the humblest rank and entirely uneducated; for I can gather, from your frequent mention of them, that you are a family which has never for an instant been divided by vice, by caprice, by ill-temper, or any one evil passion or misfortune, and that is an union which implies very great virtues in each individual, and which my own situation peculiarly fits me to reverence, although I may never enjoy it. But when to the virtues which have borne them, with steady hearts and consciences, through the trials you have described, are added the graces of education and refinement, believe me, I am prepared to think of them with the deepest admiration and affection. It is with the most unfeigned, the deepest regret, that I am compelled to decline the honour of their acquaintance."

"I must, then, bid you farewell for a time, Miss Walton," William replied; "I have a few preparations to make, and must commence my journey before daylight."

"May I hope that you will allow me the pleasure which I have solicited, of being of some assistance, if you find assistance needful?"

"I am grateful to you, Miss Walton—more grateful than I could be for any gratification which I alone was to enjoy. But my mother's will commands the obedience of my heart and of my reason; I believe that she has never incurred an obligation of a pecuniary nature, nor would she unless she were in the last necessity. Excuse my plainness; but I must say, that she would not incur any obligations, and I should be sorry if she did, unless she had at least the power of expressing her gratitude."

"I am deeply pained at your words," replied Miss Walton, greatly agitated—"I am acting rightly, though I dare not prove it. But, Mr. Herbert, this conversation has very deeply impressed me with the impropriety of my conduct. We cannot be friends—there is a gulf between us which can never be passed. Let this parting be final. I do not ask you to forget at once a

well-wisher, a friend with whom you have spent so many hours—it is not in your nature to forget so easily. Remember me as one who really wished you well; and I—I will remember you, as——"

Miss Walton turned suddenly pale, looked round, like one bereft of sense, and sat down on the sofa, hiding her face.

"Miss Walton—Miss Walton, forgive me!" cried William, in alarm, and throwing himself at her feet; "I did not mean to offend you—I am very grateful for your kindness——"

"I am not offended," she replied; "I am overpowered by my own thoughts. I must request you to leave me. Nay, no apologies—this weakness will pass over in a few seconds."

"May I, then, be allowed to communicate to you, on my return, the result of my journey?"

"I do not see the benefit of it; but leave me, I pray. If you wish it, I shall be glad to hear that the distress is not so great as you believe it to be."

William expressed his thanks, with suitable warmth, though with great brevity, as Miss Walton hastily left the room, and he went home to prepare for his journey.

At another time, the emotion of Miss Walton would have created a long and anxious train of thought in William's mind; but as the hour of his departure drew nigh, the business on which he was going entirely filled his mind, and that subject was thrust aside, to be the root of sweet and bitter fancies on a future day.

On his arrival at Burnside, he found things quite as bad as his mother's letter had led him to expect. The house was entirely consumed, and the whole of the property saved sufficient only to preserve them from actual want a very short time. This calamity had probably been caused by the thoughtlessness or carelessness of old Mrs. Hobson, who was the last person up on the night when the fire broke out. The old woman sat crying from morning till night, and all night long; but nobody had ever chided her, and

Mrs. Herbert had taken her at once with her to the poor lodgings which she now occupied in the house of one of the villagers. What remained to be done in these calamitous circumstances, was now the subject of an earnest discussion between the parties, in the midst of which, William, remembering his previous information, was surprised to see his mother perfectly well, and to observe that Fanny was not present; but what was his amazement to learn, on mentioning the subject, that Mrs. Herbert had not been ill, that Fanny had not been to Burnside, and that she had not been sent for! From the manner in which William had made the inquiry, Mrs. Herbert knew that he had reason to suppose his sister was with her, and when, from her earnest questioning, he was compelled to relate part of what he had heard at Brentham, Mrs. Herbert became violently alarmed. She talked no more about their late misfortune, the loss of house and property: the loss of all other things which she did or could possess, was as nothing

compared with the loss of one of her children—that was the point on which she was most vulnerable, and there she was as timid and fanciful as the weakest woman. There were no more conversations on pecuniary affairs: considerations regarding their daily bread had suddenly become impertinent: the mother could not even enjoy the presence of her son; the child that was safe had become infinitely less dear than the one in danger. Almost thrust out of the door, William left his broken-hearted mother in her new and wretched home, and in a very few minutes after he had entered it, departed for London, as anxious and bewildered respecting his sister, whom he was to endeavour to find.

BOOK THE NINTH.

CHAPTER I.

In this iron age of the world, when imagination is cast down from her beautiful throne, to make way for the stern rule of reality—when the ornamental of life is compelled to give way to the useful—when Raphael is considered scarcely worthy of comparison with a pin-maker—when "Jack the Giant-killer" is laid aside for "a Treatise on Political Economy," and "*Cottages on Cliffs*" are superseded by Penny Cyclopædias, to teach labouring men that, "Bulimus is a very extensive genus of terrestrial pulmoniferous molluscs, which Lamarck arranges under his Colimaces, a family of phytophagous, or plant-eating tra-

chelipods," all of which means *a snail*, I shall doubtless be asked, what is the intent and effect to be produced by the present history.

I should be glad to think I could give a satisfactory reply, by saying that my only purpose is to picture a few of the forms of man; to display some portions of human nature, which is so infinite in variety, and so universal in interest. This I conceive to be the end of all writings of an imaginative or historical character. A moral tacked to any history I consider a superfluity; since, if a moral or a meaning be not deduced from any true portraiture of society, the fault is in the reader, not in the author. Yet as the world seems more ready to take deductions than to make them, to receive conclusions rather than to consider the premises whence they arise, I must fall into the mode, and have my moral as well as the rest.

The principle, then, which I mean to illustrate, is the most common, and most universal of all principles—that which is contained in the

lives and histories of all men, which is deducible from every action of all men, and necessarily follows from every plain history of social life—Selfishness. Not selfishness in its worst form, that which shuts up the heart and mind against all human weakness and tenderness; but that which makes us indifferent to everything besides what creates tender emotions in our own hearts—the profound respect which is paid to the affections, the utter indifference displayed towards principles.

I mean not that men have hearts and have not minds—that they have passions and not principles—or that they carry out farther the emotions of the heart than the dictates of the conscience; but I assert, that they sympathize most with the humblest qualities addressed to the heart, while they are utterly indifferent to the noblest addresses to its conviction. To say that the human heart is the most beautiful study in the universe, would be a mere truism, because it is, and must be, the

highest study of which man is capable: we prove that, by investing the Deity, whom we cannot comprehend, with only the purest and noblest faculties of our own hearts. Yes, even the heart's weaknesses are beautiful; but nobler even than its best faculties are the intellectual and moral faculties which make us reasonable and accountable beings. Yet while we admit this, we are utterly and universally indifferent to every kind of virtue, saving that which ourselves or our dependents practise, or that which must have a certain effect on our interests.

In this respect, the authors of moral and useful tales generally fail. It is almost an invariable custom to make good actions lead to the approval and reward of men, and bad ones to deserved displeasure, which is to misrepresent the nature of society. I am never surprised at the heroism of a woman for her child, or her lover, or her husband—if she happen to love him; I can understand the devotion and self-sacrifice of a man for his mistress, his king, or his reli-

gion—no generosity is wonderful in the heart that loves—but I utterly disbelieve that any man ever gained even a friend by his good principles, to say nothing of a real lover or benefactor. Men give their approbation to good deeds and good principles, but they give nothing else, while they would sacrifice their souls for a worthless thing that touches their hearts; and the heart is so constituted that it is never moved by qualities which do not appeal to its weakness, or the bias which education or experience have given to it. Take any age of the world remarkable for self-devotion, and it will be found that the noblest instance awakened an active admiration in the heart of a human being. In the long array of martyrs in a miserable portion of our history, we find not an instance of an attempt to rescue a victim, produced by admiration of heroism and unconsciousness. If such attempts were made, they were made by professors of the same faith, when hatred of the oppressor and the feeling of

a common cause were the motives, which were as little disinterested as those of a gentleman who chooses to have an honest servant. The voluntary torture and death of a man for what he believed truth, never awakened a thousandth part of the devotedness which a man would display in rescuing from a sudden danger a child or friend. What politician ever saw patriotism in one who differed from him in opinion, although he lived and died poor for his principles? What generous man ever exerted himself to gain the friendship of another of whom he knew nothing but that he had sacrificed himself for a friend? What honest man ever sought out for his love the man of whom he knew only that he was honest? No; men are individually capable of the most magnificent virtue; but virtue will never draw hearts together. A smile, the tone of the voice, the expression of the countenance, will gain more love, and with love all sorts of benevolence, than all the virtues of which human nature is capable.

To state it shortly, I may say that if in this narrative I mean to shew any principle, it is merely that which arises from every description of man. The persons described invariably failed to procure the assistance of their fellow creatures by means of their good qualities—they succeeded only in obtaining it when they happened to awaken love.

CHAPTER II.

At the very moment when William Herbert was at the door of Brentham Hall, Mr. Thomas Wilson was one of a party in the dining-room, very busily engaged in that delightful work which gave the room its name. The absence of Miss Herbert did not prevent his paying attention to the wit of Lord Collington and the elegance of Mrs. Barton; he knew perfectly well that the governess was allowed to join the dinner party only when nothing besides could be found for her to do, which did not often happen. He looked forward to see her with

the children on the lawn, or to meet her at the piano when they adjourned to the drawing-room; but, contrary to custom, the children on this day did not appear, and when Mr. Wilson expressed a hope that nothing amiss had occurred, Mrs. Barton informed him that Miss Herbert had been compelled to attend her sick mother, and that therefore the children were confined at present to the school-room. At the same time, she mentioned that Miss Herbert's brother had just called, and announced that his mother's house had been destroyed by fire. On hearing this, Wilson arose with great precipitation and apologizing for his rudeness rushed out to see Mr. Herbert; but William was gone.

The information very much surprised Wilson. He had received a letter from Mrs. Herbert, the day before, which made no mention of her illness, or of the fire; yet the information of her illness could not well have reached Brentham without being conveyed by the same post as had brought his letter. He was struck by the

fact also, that Mrs. Herbert's illness and the fire were related by different messages, and he was sorely puzzled to account for it. As he made a remark on the subject his eyes happened to meet Lord Collington's, and he was struck by a peculiar expression of his lordship's countenance, as he remembered his own uneasiness at his extra politeness and attentions to Miss Herbert. What Wilson noticed could not be rightly called a blush, or confusion, as those signs of modesty were by no means suitable to his lordship's habits; but there was a quiet simper, an unintended look of conscious knowledge, which, as he made no remark and asked no question, implanted in Wilson's bosom a feeling of uneasiness which he could not explain or account for, and which he felt it impossible to thrust aside.

Dinner was no sooner over, than his lordship made preparations for departure, which Wilson was again surprised at, as Lord Collington was not less celebrated for his taste in wine than for

that other taste which people call gallantry. Wilson found that Lord Collington was not an invited guest, but had been compelled by certain private business to make a call, and had been detained to dinner. His lordship was not usually in haste to leave a party of the kind, and the impossibility of keeping him now, gave additional force to the suspicions in Wilson's mind. He had no time to arrange his thoughts, to analyze his suspicions, and to compare them with the circumstances which had occasioned them. He recollected that he could not commence his journey towards Burnside that evening, and scarcely knowing what he feared, or what he expected, an irresistible impulse led him to follow Lord Collington; and when he thought of Miss Herbert, his mind took that direction rather than towards Burnside, whither Mrs. Barton had told him she was gone. No sooner had his lordship departed in his light and elegant cab, than Wilson ordered his horse, and followed him, which he could do unobservedly, as it was

a very dark night, and the lamps of the carriage were an excellent guide for him, while they concealed him.

It was a strange kind of adventure for a man to engage in, being not only somewhat disagreeable in itself, but not unattended by danger; but when Wilson came within hearing of the carriage, the unusual swiftness of its motion convinced him that there was something uncommon to be transacted this evening, and determined him more strongly than ever to see it out.

Neither his lordship nor the pursuer slackened his pace as they entered the towns tributary to the metropolis. The carriage pushed on for the heart of the city, through Islington, and the horse followed close behind; nor did they stop till they had left the bridges, and the glare of the bustling streets, far behind them. Lord Collington's carriage at length stopped in a retired part of Kennington, at a small but handsome house, surrounded by a tolerably ca-

pacious garden; and as soon as he had entered the house, the coachman drove away.

Wilson had noticed that his lordship entered not like a visitor, but like an expected master; and a certain look given to him by the man that opened the door, made him congratulate himself on the spirit of adventure which had brought him on his lordship's track. But, however interesting might be the transactions being carried on within the house, it is to be supposed that Wilson's share in them would not be very satisfactory to him, so long as he was on the outside of it. But how was he to get in? What excuse could he make to obtain an interview with Lord Collington? If he gained an interview, what would he say? It must be allowed that these questions were pretty reasonable, since the grounds for an attack on Lord Collington was somewhat of the weakest. But as he was debating the subject in his mind, he opened the gate which led to the front door; and, striking off among the trees, narrowly examined

the door and windows for any circumstance which could help him in coming to a decision. But the door was fastened, and no light whatever appeared at any of the front windows: as, however, he turned away from the front, he discovered a side window on the first floor, from which a light streamed down into the garden, through a very thick kind of Venetian blind fastened on the outside, and which was invisible beyond the premises, being concealed from the road by foliage, and from the adjoining premises by a very high fruit-wall. Wilson climbed into the tree nearest to the window, and looked into the room, but with too far off to see more than its general appearance. It was of moderate size, seemingly very beautifully furnished; he could observe the rich satin paper of the walls, and the gorgeous gilding of picture-frames, a dinner laid out on a service of massive silver, and, what interested him more, the outline of a female figure, bonneted and cloaked: but the face of the female, the most

important thing of all, he failed to discover; and he sprang from the tree, and cast a hurried glance around the premises, as far as the light extended, endeavouring to discover something that would enable him to look into the room. Being at length so fortunate as to discover the tool-house, he procured a ladder just long enough for his purpose, and immediately set it near the window, and mounted.

All this had taken place in a very few seconds; and Wilson gained a view of the whole room just at the moment when Lord Collington entered, and the lady arose and discovered the features that Wilson could never mistake. The female was Miss Herbert. She was evidently amazed to see his lordship; but that distinguished personage did not manifest an equal surprise; for, making a bow of the most profound respect, he walked up to her, and addressed her with the utmost politeness and composure.

"Miss Herbert, I trust you will pardon this little *ruse*, suggested by the extremity of my

passion. I could not live any longer without a direct answer from your own lips, which I found it impossible to obtain at Bramham.

"Lord Collington!" cried Fanny—"you here! What is the meaning of this? Why am I detained from my journey? Mad, my lord!—what do you mean?"

"Oh, the little invention, you know, about your mother being sick, and wanting to see you. I——"

"Do you mean to say," interrupted Fanny, "that my mother is not ill?"

"O yes; it was the only excuse I could think of to withdraw you from that very disagreeable woman, Mrs. Barton."

"Thank God!—thank God! my mother is well!" sobbed Fanny, sitting down and crying for very joy; but suddenly recollecting her present circumstances, she arose, saying—"Am I to understand that I am in your lordship's house?"

"Certainly, my dear Miss Herbert. Will

you allow me to ring for your maid to shew you a dressing-room where you can leave your shawl and hat? You will find this room very warm, I assure you."

"You are very good, my lord; but I would first hear what you have to say to me."

"You will pardon me, Miss Herbert, if the peculiar circumstances of our position have compelled me to have recourse to a plan which seems to savour of violence; for, believe me, I have the most profound respect for every member of your family, and would not have had recourse to this expedient, but that that very disagreeable woman, Mrs. Barton, was constantly contriving that we should not meet."

"I fear, my lord, that I do not comprehend you! What can you wish to say to me that required this—this mode of action?"

"Pray be seated."

"Nay, my lord—proceed."

"You are not now to learn, Miss Herbert, the effect which your excellences, your accomplishments——"

"To the fact, my lord, without flattery."

"What I say, Miss Herbert, is but matter of fact. You cannot be insensible to the effect which your appearance and accomplishments must have on a heart hitherto so unoccupied as mine; but even those might have failed to produce so powerful an effect, if they had not been aided by what only my extreme respect enables me to mention—your misfortunes. I wish to impress upon your mind, that it would be the glory of my life to repair the wrongs that fortune has done you, and to spend my days in proving the strength and delicacy of my affection, by endeavours to make you happy."

"I am grateful to you for your good opinion," replied Fanny, modestly; "but I have given you an answer on this subject."

"Yes, Miss Herbert, I was so unfortunate as to be denied before; but pardon me if I doubted the possibility of even you giving a fair opinion while under the care of such a woman as Mrs. Barton. The slow tyranny of such a woman

as that, depresses the spirits, and makes one insensible even to one's advantages."

"I don't exactly see your drift, my lord," said Fanny; "if you wished me well, as I really fancied you did, any offer you might make to my advantage, might have been addressed to me at once, or to my mother, without subjecting me to the pain of believing my mother to be ill, and without my being taken from home on a false excuse, to the great injury of my reputation, and the pain of my friends."

"You look on the affair somewhat severely," said Lord Collington. "Surely, in a case like this, you would not have me refer to your mother, or to yourself in the presence of another? —my delicacy would not permit that. It was impossible for me to be satisfied with less than a direct reply from your own lips, my dear Miss Herbert, and pardon me if I say that I did not expect that your reputation would suffer; because I did not suppose that you would really insist on returning. Your own good sense will see the advantages offered you. A fortune

amply sufficient to enable you to exist, past very excellent friends, and a man not entirely unknown in the councils of the nation, who adores you, and would sacrifice himself to secure your happiness."

"I can give you no other reply, my lord. We are not on even terms. I cannot debate on this subject in your own house. I must request you to allow me to return home; and however well you may mean, there appears somewhat of inconsiderateness or selfishness in subjecting me to this violence."

"Nay, Miss Herbert, I pray you not to leave me thus. Your beauty would drive a man to greater extremes than even it has driven me to. I cannot—upon my soul, I cannot—part with you! There are no terms which I will not agree to."

"Terms, my lord!—terms!" cried Fanny. "Am I to understand that your deep sympathy in the misfortunes of our family had for its object to make me your mistress?"

"You misunderstand me, my dear Miss

Herbert. "My object is to raise you from a situation in which you are so infinitely below your birth and education."

"Pray, my lord, unto what situation could you raise me?"

"To one in which you would be under no control, but where you would be able to practise the beautiful arts in which you so greatly excel—you would have absolute control over my establishment in Grantley-street—everything which my fortune could purchase should be yours; and I should glory in being the happy instrument of snatching you from a station which is so utterly unworthy of you, and placing you in one which you would adorn."

Fanny turned away to hide a tear which started to her eye, as she felt the nature of her present situation, and the offer just made; and Lord Collington approached, and took her hand; but Fanny started back, crying—"My lord, I beg of you to stand from me. You brought me here expecting that my opinion would change

—my opinion has changed since you began to speak!"

"I hoped it would, dear Miss Herbert: may I be so happy as to be made acquainted with it?"

"Certainly; I have no objection. When you entered the room and informed me that I was brought here through a trick of your lordship's invention, I supposed your object honourable, since I paid myself the compliment of believing that no person would make me a dishonourable proposition; yet then I was inclined to be angry at the violence used: but my anger is over."

"Thank you, Miss Herbert."

"Wait a moment, before you give me your thanks. Perhaps other persons in my situation might not have been trepanned into this interview—a knowledge of the world, or of your lordship's character, would have put them on their guard. The civility of your behaviour to me I took to be the manners of a gentleman, and if any part of my conduct encouraged you

to commit this act of brutality, it was in consequence of that mistake. I knew not that there were men so dishonourable and wicked as to plan the destruction of a helpless creature like me, under the guise of sympathy in the afflictions with which Providence has visited me, and at the only fireside which shelters me from want. I am not angry with you, my lord, because I despise you; and if as a young, simple girl you considered me a fair object for this kind of pursuit, you will judge from the calmness of my language that I perfectly comprehend your character, and that you will not find it to your interest to detain me here."

"Nay, Miss Herbert," said Lord Collington, "you take a very unjust view of my proposition, and when you consider what opportunities you will have of contributing to the support of your excellent mother——"

"My 'excellent mother' would rather starve than be provided for in the way you suggest, and I would rather she should."

"But consider, Miss Herbert, this is a matter of greater consequence now than ever. Only this day I heard that your mother's house had been burnt to the ground. Consider her distress—consider that you have it in your power to relieve her."

"My lord," said Fanny, "I am not in a condition to be able to believe you; but even if what you state be true, I ought to be with her, and not here. I think you will have no objection to order a carriage for me."

"You shall have whatever you please, if you will listen to me a moment."

"My lord, I perfectly comprehend you, and I have answered you; and if I am not to ride from the house, I will walk."

"Nay, Miss Herbert——"

"Do you mean to tell me that I am your prisoner?"

"My dearest Miss Herbert," Lord Collington commenced in a very earnest manner, taking her hand, when the young lady started back,

crying—"Do not touch me!" and Wilson, fearing that his lordship might not be content with the rather unsatisfactory result of his eloquence, sprang from the ladder, and rushed to the front door. A short, fierce, double rap brought the servant to the door, when Wilson asked to see Lord Collington.

"Lord Collington does not live here," said the lackey.

"Who does live here, then?" asked Wilson.

"Mr. Smith."

"I wish to see Mr. Smith, then."

"You can't—he is particularly engaged."

"We shall see whether I can't," said Wilson, pushing by the man, as he fancied he heard a loud exclamation in a well-known voice. He rushed up stairs in a moment, and opened the door which he calculated to belong to the room he sought, and no sooner had he opened it, than Fanny rushed to him in a very excited manner, and throwing herself into his arms,

exclaimed—"Thank God, you are here, dear Thomas!"

There was something in that [illegible] of welcome sweeter to [illegible] than all the words that had ever met his ears. The pet-name of his Christian name uttered by Miss Herbert, after the somewhat formal appellation of Bentham, brought back a sudden thought of his ploughboy days, and what he owed to the young maiden. That appeal to him for protection, made him bold enough to face a hundred lords, or other more terrible animals, so that he was very little frightened at Lord Collington's furious cry of—

"What the devil are you?"

"I believe that I have the honour of your lordship's acquaintance," said Wilson.

"What, Mr. Wilson?—pray, may I inquire the subject of this unexpected visit?"

"I am come to escort Miss Herbert to whatever place she may appoint."

"Stay, sir," cried his lordship, ringing the

bell; and when the servant appeared, he demanded, in a furious tone—"How dare you suffer this fellow to intrude on me?"

"He forced himself by me, my lord, without warning me of his intention."

"Put him out of the house, then."

As the man approached to execute this order, Fanny clung more resolutely than before to Wilson, when he said—

"You will see, my lord, that Miss Herbert is inclined to leave the house with me, as I am determined not to leave it without her. You will, therefore, either allow us to walk out together, or use violence to separate us, which would not add much to your renown."

"Are you come here to preach me a sermon, you rascally sugar-seller! Do you come to insult me, because your station prevents your giving the satisfaction of a gentleman, and, at worst, you can be only handed over to the police?"

"I beg to set your lordship right. You will not hand me over to the police, because that

would enable me to take away this lady by force. As for the satisfaction you speak of—this lady's brother is of a rank that would not disgrace your lordship's courage, though I know not whether he may think it worth his while to demand satisfaction of you. But as regards myself, I am happy to be beneath your vengeance; yet, if your lordship condescends to insult me, I suppose you intend to waive the difference of our stations, in which case I beg leave to hand you my address."

His lordship was taken by surprise—he was not prepared for the interposition of our friend—he, in fact, made a very poor figure on this occasion; and when Wilson led Miss Herbert from the room, he was not interrupted by the brilliant nobleman or his satellite.

CHAPTER III.

No sooner were our friends in the high-road, than Wilson said to the young lady—"I thank God that you are safe, Miss Herbert! But where will you go? I would offer to conduct you at once to Brentham, but we should not arrive there before midnight, and—and—perhaps it would be well not to give much publicity to this cruel outrage. If you will do me the honour of accompanying me home, our housekeeper, a very respectable old woman, will be happy to attend on you until you decide on removing."

"That man said that my dear mother's house was destroyed—is that true?"

"I fear it is."

"Oh, then, I will go at once to find her!"

"Shall you be able?"

"Anything—anything!—only let me go to my mother!"

"You will, then, permit me to see you at Burnside, I hope?"

"Permit you, Thomas! Excuse me, Mr. Wilson, I was thinking of my mother; and in this dark night, when I cannot see you or the house, I had forgotten all that has passed since we left Burnside."

"I always forget everything that has passed since then," said Wilson; "and I was very glad to hear the name by which you formerly addressed me. May I, then, accompany you?"

"You have just rendered me such an important service, that I know not how to ask for another; and yet—yet, if you will keep at my side for a little time—I am afraid—I do not

know my way, and there is no person in all London that I am acquainted with, besides brother William, and I cannot recollect where to find him."

"Mr. William, I have reason to believe, is at Burnside. I heard of the accident only at the moment when I conceived you might be in danger, or I should have been there before now. We cannot, however, commence the journey for about four hours, during which time you can remain at an hotel, while I go home, as I must see my grandfather, for very urgent reasons, before I start. But if you will condescend to honour me with your company—if you will place so much confidence in me——"

"Oh yes, yes, Mr. Wilson!" Fanny cried, "I will go with you. I will not go to an hotel. I thoroughly depend on your protection."

"You make me very happy and proud," said Wilson; and after walking a short distance with his most adored companion, he called a coach from the first stand they came to, put the

young lady in, and himself at her side, and was soon set down at his own door in Islington.

The housekeeper of No. 10, Conrad Place, was not like those housekeepers, read of in romances, who keep their doors locked against their masters, and treat them with an abusive oration from an upper window. Conrad Place was not fit for a romantic scene, but was as plain a matter-of-fact place as can be imagined; and the old housekeeper knew too well the value of twelve pounds a year to hazard it lightly, by abusing either her old master or his young one. Thomas, indeed, had given the young opinion of the old lady by surveying from the house the humility and [illegible] by a comparison of the only home he had known, with that more splendid mansion [illegible] to inhabit; so that Mrs. Pickleweed felt towards him somewhat as a mother to a prodigal son, without losing the respect which she owed to the last representative of a family in which she had spent so great a proportion of her days.

Very proud was she to wait on a lady whom Mr. Thomas treated with such respect; and the very best of her professional nicnacs were hunted out from odd corners and shelves sacred to her examination, to tempt the appetite of the delicate young lady. But prouder than she, was Mr. Thomas Wilson. It was a pride—a delight, unexpected and unhoped for—to have Miss Fanny sitting at what he might call his own table, warming herself at his fireside, and seemingly perfectly at home. There needed no invitation now to induce her to remove her bonnet and shawl. Finding that she was to stay three hours, she went to a dressing-room with Mrs. Picklewell, while Thomas went up to his grandfather, and returned, freed from those travelling habiliments, looking like a daughter of the house.

And happy indeed would any house be that possessed so beautiful and gentle a daughter! Even that house, polluted by the long residence of the sordid old man, seemed sud-

denly purified and brightened: the old housekeeper thought the little room had never looked so cheerful; and Thomas—his forget appetite and compliment, and everything in the world, except the fairy-like spirit that was transforming the house into a heaven.

One would think that the habit of seeing the young lady treated as a mere governess, to be called into the room to shew the children, to perform on an instrument like a hired person, or to make one in a party only when a vacancy must be filled up, would have lowered that awful kind of respect which Wilson's early circumstances had inevitably created; but it had an opposite effect—the very uncertainty of seeing her at Brentham, her joining the party on different terms from the rest, were grounds on which his imagination could work, and he never could divest himself of the feeling that Miss Herbert, and not Mrs. Barton, was the principal person. With such feelings towards the young lady, he could have been content to wait on her

while she refreshed herself at table, without a thought of taking the liberty to join her.

But however satisfying to a lover may be the sweet food he takes in by his eyes, an old housekeeper is apt to recommend something rather more substantial, if less heavenly. Mrs. Pickle-well put him a plate opposite to Miss Herbert's; the young lady looked as though she expected him to sit down with her as a matter of course; and, behold Mr. Thomas Wilson and Miss Herbert in somewhat differing circumstances from those in which we first beheld them!

The couple of hours after supper spent in conversation, were, to at least one of the party, exquisitely sweet. There were no thanks rendered for past or present services—no reminiscences of former pleasures—no professions of esteem, or declarations of friendship; but both young, both guileless, both respecting each other, their converse gradually grew into somewhat of a confidential nature, so that before the time for commencing the journey, each had told

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a stage-coach for a hundred miles with that maiden whom he dearly loved. They arrived at the end of their journey the next afternoon; and, as they got out of the coach, the first person they saw was William Herbert, who was just getting on one to return to London in search of Fanny. How happy that meeting was, and how heartily they greeted each other, I leave to the imagination, as also that other meeting with their elder relatives, which seemed in the assurance of personal safety to render the destruction of property a subject scarcely worthy of consideration. Suffice it to say, that Mrs. Herbert now felt herself most abundantly repaid for the few idle hours she had formerly spent on the young man, when she saw him the protector of her beloved child.

It has not yet appeared that Mr. Wilson shewed any very great sorrow on account of the accident which had befallen his former benefactress, since I have not quoted any expression of condolence or sorrow from his lips. But

however this may tell against him, in the minds of the class of people called amiable, by which I mean those that confine their sympathy to charitable and tender professions, I trust his character will appear in a little better light, when I mention that he undertook the journey with the will and the power to make restitution for all the damage which the fire had done. The object of his interview with his grandfather previous to the journey, had been to inform him of the misfortune, and to insist on being empowered to spend what money he should want, giving, at the same time, a pretty strong hint that it was the only condition of his remaining with him. The old man, become dotingly fond of the late recognised child, gave way with very little hesitation, and young Wilson almost blessed the dreadful accident which had thrown him into such intimate communication with the Herberts.

The ploughboy stood now in a very different position in that family circle, from that in which we first saw him. Then, he was

the poorest, and the most ignorant of them all, and the one which a stranger would have selected as the fittest object of protection; but now, he seemed the protector and superior of all, as he was the only one whom they all looked up to for assistance. His rescue of Fanny from the private house of Lord Collington, gained for him almost the adoration of Mrs. Herbert, and the heartiest friendship of William, while his determined offer to build and furnish a new cottage, though, in strict justice, it was only a fair reparation of the accident caused by his relative, yet coming at a time when hope seemed utterly gone, and the workhouse the only place of refuge, it necessarily made the hearts of all the Herberts cheerful, and they regarded him as the cause of it; while the old grandmother could not have thought more of him if he had been a king, so amazed was she at the wealth which he insisted on expending.

CHAPTER IV.

The reunion described in the last chapter was not disturbed during a few days; and when it was necessary for some members of it to depart, they did not leave without evident reluctance, circumstances of suffering and trial having bound them all up, as it were, in one family, by making their interests identical.

William Herbert and Wilson departed for London together in a few days, looking forward to future intercourse there as dear friends; and it was not till after an appointment for an early meeting, that they parted, Wilson turning his

face towards his counting-house, and Herbert his towards the lawyer's office in the Temple, or perhaps towards Cecil-street.

The interviews between him and Miss Walton were renewed as soon as he returned to London, and continued a week or two without any circumstance requiring relation, save that the evenings grew gradually longer, and the meetings mere matters of course, when one evening William became suddenly conscious that since his visit to Burnside there had been a material change in the behaviour of the young lady. One great charm of her manners formerly was that they took their tone from the circumstances of the moment rather than from any plan or system; so that whatever might be the subject of conversation, the style of her remarks was in unison with, and derived directly from, whatever she had been lately interested in. The cause of this was her natural sincerity, and the effect of it was to give to her manners an ease and simplicity inexpressibly charming, as it immediately

convinced one that what she said or did was without any concealed motive, or predetermination, and was a delightful contrast to the manners of the great majority of young ladies, who are taught from infancy to talk about music, drawing, or Goethe, or to look pathetic, thoughtful, or brilliant, as best suits their complexion, or style of face and figure. The mixture of wit, sentiment, humour, and common-sense, which had so greatly delighted William, had now vanished, and left in their stead a thoughtfulness too dull and melancholy to be called seriousness. Her conversation had turned from subjects of taste, genius, and elegance, to religion and the nature and destiny of man, and those metaphysical points which rush on a strong mind when suffering or fearing evil. William feared that some misfortune had happened to her, and longed to inquire into its nature, and offer his services to assist her; but in spite of his great anxiety, a sense of delicacy forbade his inquiring into a subject so sacred until she

were inclined to disclose it, which seemed not to be the case at present: but his language and manners acquired a more serious and respectful air, and he spoke to her in those softening tones of feeling and tenderness peculiar to friendship and love.

A few meetings passed in this manner, when one evening going as usual to Cecil Street, Miss Walton was playing as he entered the drawing-room. Merely bowing to her as he passed, he went to the sofa, and took up a book. It was one that she had been reading, for he saw on it what he knew must be marks of tears. He now resolved that he would no longer delay the offering her any assistance that might be in his power, and he walked to her side. She looked up in his face smiling, and continued her music, which was a piece of magnificent joy. He was amazed; he fancied that whatever had pained her was no longer in existence, for as her fingers danced with almost invisible swiftness among the strings, the beautiful ex-

pression of her face was in exact accordance with the music: afterwards, she put a volume of songs on the stand, of which she sang the merriest, after every song conversing with him as formerly, and uttering many a brilliant sally of wit and repartee. William was rejoiced that the darkness had passed away from her heart; yet from some indescribable cause, he trembled at her cheerfulness, and thought that he had never seen her smile less beautiful. At her earnest request, he attempted to sing, but breaking down in the middle of his song, he frankly confessed that he was not in a humour to sing, and went away and sat himself on the sofa. Miss Walton immediately thrust away the harp, followed him, sat by him, and endeavoured to rouse him from his depression.

"I have never before seen you cast down as now," she said; "but I do not wonder at seeing it. You must often think on what you have been, what you ought to be, and what you are. But you have an eternal and perpetual

comfort; your conscience is pure—your guilt has not cast you down—if you struggle with an adverse fate, you have not also to struggle with remorse—may you never know the horror of that struggle! You have the peace of innocence, the greatest of all blessings. You have not resigned, and for ever, any real good, to grasp at some of the showy vanities of the world; for then I should—O how I should pity you! Mr. Herbert, my friend, if not you, who has a right to a steady hope in the justice of Providence? Has any fresh misfortune befallen you?"

"Oh, no!" William replied eagerly; "I have forgotten my misfortunes—I have nothing to complain of—I wish no change in my circumstances. I could be very happy. But, has any misfortune befallen you?"

"I can defy misfortunes," she replied, with a steady voice; and as she spoke she arose from the sofa and went again to the harp.

In this uneasy manner the evening passed

away; but at length the hour of parting arrived, and William, pressing her hand, wished Miss Walton a good evening, and left the room. But before he had pulled-to the door, he was called back by the words faintly uttered, yet distinctly heard—"Mr. Herbert." As he re-entered the room, Miss Walton was standing resolutely upright, and looking in his face with an unmoved countenance, she said, with a steady voice—"I called you back, sir, to say that the good evening you wished me must be a farewell."

"A farewell, Miss Walton!" William cried, in amazement; "what am I to understand by those words! Surely—surely, Miss Walton, you do not mean—you cannot mean—that I am not to see you again!"

"I do not wish to surprise you in any way," Miss Walton replied; "and I thought it best to tell you, that you might not seek me here again."

William was cut to the heart by her coolness

and determination of manner, and said, in those low trembling tones that come from, and seldom fail to reach, the heart—"I fear I have offended you, Miss Walton; but, believe me, I would suffer all the misery the circumstances of this life could bring on me rather than give you the slightest offence. If I have been so unfortunate as to do it, believe me it was unintentionally; and if you will point out to me how I have done it, my sorrow for the offence will prevent a repetition of it!"

"You have not offended me, Mr. Herbert," she replied.

"If I presumed too far on the favour you had shewn me when I asked you a question this evening, believe, Miss Walton, that I meant not to be impertinently curious. I thought you were not at ease, and I longed to serve you."

"I was grateful to you, sir," she replied.

"Oh, then, Miss Walton, if I have not offended you—why will you punish me so severely?" William eagerly replied.

"Punish you, Mr. Herbert!" said Miss Walton, with some surprise.

"I have seen," continued William, earnestly; "I have seen the mansion of my forefathers in the possession of strangers—I have seen the dearest spot of my childhood destroyed—I have seen my dear parent and sister thrust from the comforts in which they had been nurtured, and reduced to extreme poverty and the contempt and insult which poverty entails—I myself, from within a span of the accomplishment of my dearest hopes, have been reduced to the level of the lowest of men, and I have borne up against all; but I can never bear up against this."

"Cease this conversation, I beseech you," Miss Walton replied, with evident tenderness; "three months back you would have believed yourself incapable of this—this weakness."

"Three months!" William exclaimed—"three months have changed my nature!—I am to blame, I know it. I have been thoughtless—

I ought to have expected this—I ought not to have sought your society—I ought not to presume to ask for it now. I have been to blame, and I must suffer for it. But oh, Miss Walton! if you are determined on our separation, make your determination as merciful as you can! Cast me not off at once; let me see you, as seldom as you will—let me but see you, and I will endeavour to find no pleasure in your society."

He hid his face on the sofa. Miss Walton did not answer immediately: but William felt a cold and trembling hand laid in his, and as he looked up, Miss Walton was weeping aloud in violent grief, and, staggering to his side, she sat down by him, saying—"If I were offended, or wished to give you pain, I should not be as you see me."

"Miss Walton! Miss Walton! I will obey you at once," William exclaimed; "my selfishness shall not cause you to shed a tear."

"I have learned to mourn for myself," she replied.

"Then let not the unhappy seek after the unhappy—sorrow looks for sorrow, for sorrow. Oh, Miss Walton! what is there I would not do to save you from a moment's unhappiness? often know not, you cannot imagine, I would gladly wish you to feel the terrible delight which has latterly filled my heart; still less would I have you feel the terror which overpowers me at imagining the possibility of seeing you no more. Let me see you as you will, where you will, when you will—let me only see you; and if a poor man may do anything for such a one as you, there is nothing short of my soul which I would not gladly sacrifice to your peace."

"Mr. Herbert," she sobbed, "have mercy on me! You distress me."

"You have taken an interest in my fate," William continued; "by your noble sentiments you have fortified my soul against misfortune; but, the worst of all misfortunes you have not strengthened me to bear, but awakened me to feel. Miss Walton, be not my enemy!"

"You are cruel—very cruel," she said, with tears; "if you knew the pain you give me, you would not speak as you do. Leave me a minute or two."

William moved away to a short distance, where he stayed a few seconds until she called him back; and when he returned and looked in her face, he was shocked at the alteration made in a few seconds, for not only was it pale, but there was a rigid discomposure in every feature that made her appear like a mortal turned into marble, in the very hour of heart-breaking grief.

"Sit by me, Mr. Herbert," she said; and he seated himself by her side. She took both his hands in hers, as she said—"I endeavoured to restrain my feelings until we had parted; but some sorrows are beyond the will. You are a feeling man, and I need not apologize for my tears: I would rather be thought weak than cold. I am grieved that I must give you pain; believe me, nothing but

immovable necessity could impel me to inflict it; but you will not bear it alone. I do not act lightly: after a few days it would be impossible for us to meet—no change of circumstances could make our separation other than final."

"But not now—not now!" William cried; "let me see you once again."

"To what purpose should we meet?" she replied, with evident tenderness; "why should we meet, when we know beforehand that the parting must be eternal? Parting now, we gain one day's advance towards forgetfulness or composure, instead of adding another day's power to our sorrow."

"Forgetfulness! composure!" William exclaimed.

"No, sir," Miss Walton replied, quickly; "I will not do either of us the injustice to believe that the companionship we have lately held can be composedly forgotten, or resigned; and this very conviction teaches me that it is our

imperative duty to part at once. I call on you for the highest proof that a man can give of his —his friendship; I call on you to earn my eternal gratitude, by giving up your earnest wishes to mine. I beseech you, sir, obey me; look for me no more—leave me to my own fate!"

"To your fate!—even you speak as though you had some evil to suffer or to fear. But, surely, Miss Walton, so young as you are, so retiring in your life, so—so formed by nature to attract the good and deter the evil—surely you can have nothing to dread which an appeal to your friends might not prevent."

"I have no friends—none—none!" she cried, covering her face with her hands.

"Suffer me, Miss Walton, to call myself one," William replied, with the utmost tenderness; "the friendship to be shewed by money I cannot offer, and I am sure you do not require it; but if the most unceasing attention to your wishes—the most unlimited obedience to your

commands—if perseverance and boldness, to the sacrifice of my life, can benefit you, I shall be rejoiced if you will accept them from me."

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"Would to Heaven you would try me, Miss Walton!" William replied, earnestly. "I fear you do not properly estimate the value of the energies of a devoted heart."

"Oh, yes—yes!" she cried, "I do know them. I am grateful to you, but you cannot assist me, save by leaving me."

"Miss Walton—dear Miss Walton!" William cried, quite bewildered at this unexpected scene; "your present distress makes it more difficult to leave you. You know not what you require of me."

"Do I not?" she replied; "why, then, do I tremble?—why am I not composed? But what

I require is for your own good—for your own happiness. We have been rather thoughtless than blameable, and I so more than you. It was to be expected that so young, so fond of the same pursuits, so lonely, we should find pleasure in each other's society; but I ought to have foreseen this hour, and prevented it. I have been blameable, and shall suffer for it. Do not you make my suffering greater by refusing to do what I request. Let us not have to blame ourselves for more than thoughtlessness."

"What you require is very hard to do."

"If it were not, should I implore you with tears—with an almost breaking heart—to do it? Oh, no, sir! I shall have to bear what I cannot now say, but what I contemplate with terror. Dear Mr. Herbert, what I request you to do is necessary, and can never by any possibility cease to be so. Here is a little picture; I painted it for you. I shall never draw another. Take it, and when you look on it, think of me without anger and without regret."

William felt his hand pressed to her heart, which beat fearfully against it, while she said—

"Prove that I am not mistaken in you. Go, sir—go immediately; and God Almighty bless you!"

When she saw that he still lingered, as if stupified at this unexpected event, she cried—

"You try me beyond my strength—you are cruel—God have mercy on me!" and fell back on the sofa, like a dead person. He rang for the servant, and went down, to wait for her recovery: but when he asked if he might see Miss Walton, he was informed that she was in bed, very ill, and desired him not to wait.

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning William went to Cecil-street, when, walking as usual into the drawing-room, he saw, as soon as he entered it, that his doom was fixed. The harp was gone; the table was no longer strewed with books—one only lay on it, and that was the book which he had first seen in that room. He took it up, and turning to her name, found written under it—"To William Herbert." The grate was ornamented with cut paper; the front windows were open; and through the open doorway to the inner apartment, he could see that it was in the same

comfortless condition. She had evidently left the house, without intending to return. William knew that she wished to see him no more, and respecting, without knowing, her motives, he left the house without inquiring for her address.

But there was a fearful tumult in his heart. Entirely unaccustomed to the influence of female society, and thrown, with all his ardent feelings, into familiarity with one so well fitted to call forth the latent passions of youth; his mind had been overwhelmed by feelings which he had indulged from the very fear of examining. These, when they subsided, left an ineffaceable impression of tenderness and devotion in his heart towards her whose every word and action had proved her to be the very creature to throw light on the darkest places of life; the very creature to make a thought of life a thought of happiness —the very creature for him. And now, taken from him so suddenly and for ever, life seemed like nature if the sun were suddenly blotted from the firmament, or like the world if goodness

were suddenly expelled from the heart of mankind—all blankness, all darkness, all hopelessness.

But besides the sorrow which William Herbert necessarily felt on account of the sudden and unprepared separation from a woman so devoutly loved, a feeling of personal shame, connected with this attachment, oppressed him whenever he thought on the subject. He loved,—the woman he loved had confessed that she was labouring under some important misfortune; and it was his duty, as it ought to have been his dearest happiness, to rescue her from it if it existed, or to shield her from it if it were only threatened. Yet what had he done?—he had merely declared his attachment in the words of friendship—he had merely offered his services in her behalf, while there were a thousand reasons why she might not accept any services from a young man ignorant of her situation and connexions, and who had not put himself in the situation proper for one who was to act in her behalf. He had been called on by every prin-

ciple of manhood, to declare himself in such terms as would have taken away all the indelicacy of his interference, if she had not been indifferent to his appeals—she had thanked him for the warmth of his friendship which validated every demonstration of his friendship, and would she not have welcomed more delight to meet a man of honour, to have brought him to plead herself and her troubles to his bosom, and give him a legitimate right to protect her? If he had loved her—if he had meant anything by his attentions—if he had intended by his looks to understand anything from his compassionate action and passionate enjoyment of their society, ought he to have allowed her to depart from him in despair, without endeavouring to restore to her an eternal friendship by the legitimate and intent of love—marriage? Must she not believe he had trifled with her? Had not he professed his love by actions—by every form of words short of a direct declaration? Had he not acted dishonourably?

But, on the other hand, what was he, and what was she? He was a lawyer's clerk, who had not ten pounds, or so much as a bed, of his own in the whole world, and was entirely without a hope of brighter fortune; while she seemed accustomed to every luxury, and from her whole behaviour and appearance was in command of money to any amount. Was he, then, the fellow of the lowest wretches on earth —the understrappers of the law—to offer or even to wish to make her descend from her sphere of elegance and fortune to the same low fellowship. Ought he, as a man of honour, to have taken advantage of her fear of some misfortune, which after all might be of little importance, to induce her to take a step which must injure her prospects, which she might afterwards regret, and look on him as the guilty cause of? What had he to offer to atone for what she must resign? Had he not acted with a more tender regard for her, and with a truer idea of the dignified unselfishness of love in

offering her the services of his body and mind in her behalf, than he should have done if his offers had been clogged with a condition which, though it might have released her from her present trouble, would have entailed eternal poverty on her head? Was not poverty to be blamed, for the apparent inconsistency of his conduct? William was convinced that he was not really blameable; and now felt, with a power unknown before, the evils inseparable from poverty.

Such was the course of thought in William's mind, when he was certain that he should not see Miss Walton again; but though the conclusion he came to was, that he had acted as well as he could, and that inevitable circumstances alone had prevented the conduct which he wished to pursue, yet as the thought continually occurred that Miss Walton was lost for ever, he again blamed himself as at first, and again pursued the same course of reflection in his defence. Thus a couple of days passed

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But on the third morning after this terrible separation the postman brought him a letter which altered the whole nature of his prospects. This letter was from—no, dear reader, not from Miss Walton, but from Mrs. Herbert. It was written in the highest degree of delight, and congratulated him in the most rapturous manner on another letter enclosed which she had just received, and which was as follows:—

"Madam,—Though a stranger to you, I need not apologize for troubling you with this letter, because I believe it must give you pleasure. The misfortunes of yourself and your family must have been a source of lasting grief to you, for your children's sake, if not for your own. I

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"Madam,—Though a stranger to you, I need not apologize for troubling you with this letter, because I believe it must give you pleasure. The misfortunes of yourself and your family must have been a source of lasting grief to you, for your children's sake, if not for your own. I

speak not only as regards the mere deprivations consequent on poverty, but of the waste of their education, and the destruction of their dearest hopes. In this I more particularly allude to your son, whose present condition is not only a misfortune to himself, but also for his country and for religion, since I am sure he would be an ornament to the sacred profession which he has chosen as his own. I would gladly have the honour of being a friend to your family as far as circumstances will permit; and I beg to inform you that I have this morning taken the liberty of placing five hundred pounds in your son's name, at the bank of Messrs. Casher and Co., for the purpose of enabling him to prosecute his studies at the university; and when I find that sum withdrawn from the bank I shall replace it by a sum sufficient to purchase the living to which your son has so long looked forward, and which I have ascertained there will be no difficulty in procuring by the time when he will be qualified to hold it.

"As my offers of service are in one sense limited to your son, you may fancy I could have written at once to him; but I feared that his pride might refuse a favour from an unknown hand, and I have not time to enter into a correspondence to persuade him. I write to you because I do not doubt that your parental affection will be stronger than that pride which dares not receive because it has once had the power to give, and I doubt not that you will prevail on your son to accept my offer.

"My name it would be useless to mention, since it is impossible that I should ever have the pleasure of forming an acquaintance with you. I leave England, as I suppose, for ever, in the course of a week; but before I leave I shall call at the bank, and if I find that my offer has been rejected by your son, I beg that you will make use of the money for your daughter's benefit, since I shall never withdraw it from the bank to inflict the pain of knowing myself entirely refused the pleasure of contributing to

the happiness of a family which I esteem and reverence more than any other on earth."

The information contained in this letter was so unexpected, and so entirely unexampled in all that William knew of fortune, and the motives and actions of mankind; the method of offering the benefit, and the critical time at which he received it, bore such a fabulous air, that he read the letter in a state of indifference, caused by inability to comprehend a blessing so great for which he was so entirely unprepared. His mind was disordered by the magnitude of the intelligence, and while he sat gazing with a bewildered eye on the letter which promised him such an astounding benefit, he seemed like a man suddenly taken from the darkness of a dungeon, and set at liberty in the blazing light of the noon-day sun.

But this delirium lasted not long. The confused crowd of thoughts which at first overwhelmed him separated into distinct concep-

tions of happiness to come, for himself and his beloved relations, and as he laid his pen on the desk, he said to himself, with a feeling of rapturous exultation—"I shall never fill a parchment after this."

But was it not just possible there might be some mistake in all this! If it was not a dream, might there not be a mistake in the person addressed, or might not the writer's purpose have changed, or become incapacitated from fulfilling it since the intention was first avowed? Very few moments elapsed before William had entered the bank, and ascertained beyond doubt that there were five hundred pounds in the banker's books, which he, and he alone, could withdraw at any time. He would not have sold his hopes for a bishopric.

But who was his benefactor? Could it be one of his father's friends? He examined the impressions made on his mind by the conduct of every former acquaintance of his family, but could not find one, peer or commoner, laic or

clerical, whose behaviour had been such as to warrant any expectations from their generosity, gratitude, or respect. Could his benefactor be a relation? He knew of no relation in the world, save his great uncle, Lord Berlingham, who could afford to be liberal, and he was well assured that his lordship was not accustomed to hide his light under a bushel. He was quite certain that whenever his lordship made a donation, he would accompany it by a lecture on his own generosity, and the demerits of the person benefited. But if either an old friend or relation had presented him with this money, why was the gift reserved until the present moment? The largeness of the sum was evidence of considerable wealth; and a real friend would have assisted them before, and saved them from the many distresses which they had had to bear. But if this sum of money were not the gift of a friend or relation, who was the giver?—and why was it bestowed? Was he justified in receiving money from a person who must be

either ashamed of his own name, or disdained to be acquainted with him and his family, and despised their gratitude? Would it not be mean and beggarly to receive alms thus rudely bestowed? But might it not be also attended with danger, since when he might not be in a condition to give back what he had received, his seeming benefactor might come forward and expect in return some services which a man of honour and religion could not perform? Yet the letter which offered the money was written in a very simple and open manner; nothing could be gathered from it of a suspicious nature; he fancied that there was a tinge of melancholy in it; and certainly the letter contained evidences of the writer's modesty, since he endeavoured to provide against a rude refusal even of so important a benefit offered with such humble respect. Besides this, William had not committed himself in any way, and need not to do it, since he had only to ask for the money, and it was paid at once. He felt convinced that

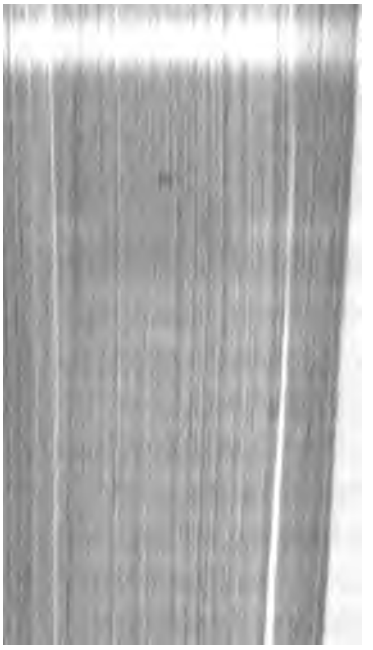
there could be no danger, and wondered that he could have hesitated one moment at the acceptance of so much bliss as seemed to be offered to him, although his benefactor was at present unknown.

Just as he arrived at this conclusion, he found himself,—to his great surprise, of course, —in the neighbourhood of the Egyptian Hall, and at the door of a well-known house in Cecil Street. Miss Walton was not there, and had not been since he last called; nor could the master of the house recommend him to call again at any particular time as the most likely to find her there. William disdained to examine him very narrowly, but calling for pen, ink, and paper, he wrote the following letter, and left it with the tradesman to be delivered to Miss Walton at the first opportunity:—

"Dear Miss Walton,—Though my heart has been breaking ever since I parted from you, I have hitherto abstained from seeking you, partly

because it was your wish I should do so, and partly because I felt how unworthy was one in my situation to seek the honour of your society. I would not seek you now, but that something of importance has happened to me, and that all the happiness of my life depends on my seeing you. Excuse this boldness—it is warranted by friendship. In the name of that friendship, I implore you to meet me once more. Let not my remembrance of you be linked with the thought that you refused my last request. Remember what you have been to me in my adversity, and wonder not that I still cling to your presence. Remember, also, that if the meeting be painful to you, you have the power to prevent another, since, if I would, I cannot compel you to see me, by thrusting myself where you are. I am altogether dependent on your mercy, and I trust in your generosity to grant my request."

A couple of days passed in great anxiety to



this evenir

CHAPTER VI.

Miss Walton was already in the house at Cecil Street when William Herbert arrived. She was sitting on the sofa as he entered the drawing-room, and when she looked up on hearing him, he rushed forward and threw himself at her feet, exclaiming—"Miss Walton! Miss Walton!—is it really you! What is the matter? A week has so changed you that I scarce know you. Your face is very pale, and your hands are cold as death—what ails you? Speak to me! let me hear at least a voice that I love!"

"I am well, sir," Miss Walton replied. "Do

not humiliate yourself by kneeling to me. Rise, I pray, and inform me why you have required this meeting."

William arose, and put the letters in her hand, amazed and shocked at the coldness with which she spoke; for though her manner was calm, the calmness appeared to proceed from the will rather than from the heart. Her exquisite temper seemed to be strung up tightly for the labour of this evening, and William dreaded that the reaction might be such a struggle, or such suffering as had already given the hue of sickness to her attenuated face and form.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Herbert," Miss Walton said, when she had cast her eyes over the papers put in her hand; "I congratulate you, sir, on having obtained a situation which you have so much wished for, and for which you are so well fitted."

"I do not refuse your congratulations," he replied, "for I feel that I am to be congratulated. No one save myself can tell what new

life these letters have given me. May God bless the writer of them! Would to God that I may discover to whom I am indebted! What a friend shall I discover, Miss Walton!—one who knows not only how to bestow, but how to give. How could I refuse, Miss Walton? I should have been ungrateful and unfeeling to refuse a benefit so given. I do confess that one great weight is taken from my heart. I shall no longer be what I loathe. I shall be able to persevere in the studies which I have been compelled to relinquish. I shall be able to place my dear parent in the rank to which she was born, and of which she is altogether worthy; but, Miss Walton, I shall not be happy if—if——"

"If what, sir?" she asked, as William paused abruptly.

"Miss Walton," he continued, "I beseech you to hear without anger what I have to say—you can make me sufficiently miserable without that. If I go to the country alone, not the exaltation

of my dear mother—not the unexpected fulfilment of my long estranged hopes—not the consciousness of doing my duty to God and to man, will make me happy. I shall preach to society, I shall preach the word of God with a wandering heart, and without love. If my relations with the world I have around me many of the elements of happiness, it will be in vain while my heart wants the most essential. I was a poor mean adventurer, Miss Walton, when I first saw you; yet even then I had a sense of my own uprightness, and of the overruling providence of God, which kept me from being miserable, for my heart was at peace. I saw you beautiful and happy, and worshipped you as a being of a nature too lofty to be affected by human vicissitudes. I saw you in sorrow, and my heart recognised your alliance with its own nature. I sought your society: I became acquainted with the accomplishments and the powers of your mind, and I admired the genius: I became acquainted

with the tenderness, the purity, the goodness of your heart, and I loved the woman."

"I came not to hear this, Mr. Herbert," Miss Walton said, rising, in great agitation; "you distress me. Leave me, I pray; or say why you wished to see me!"

"Do you not know, then, that this is why I wished to see you? Is it possible that you could be insensible of the inevitable effect of my acquaintance with you? Miss Walton, I love you dearly, and for ever,—nay, I do not mean to offend or distress you. I am perfectly conscious that all I possess, or can possess, is infinitely below your value; yet what man, whatever his station in society, can give more, as a proof of his respect for a woman, than all his hopes, all his pleasures, all his powers, all himself, however little that all may be? If I were to continue poor, as far as my own feelings are concerned, I could say what I now say. I would have most gladly shared my lot with you; and nothing but the thought of

the tremendous sacrifice you [illegible] deterred me from declaring the [illegible] of my soul. Do not suppose that the sudden exaltation has made me presumptuous. I love you for yourself alone, and the very [illegible] of my love kept my tongue silent when my heart was bursting. I fancied it would be an insult for any one under the rank of a gentleman to address you; but yours is a mind that is not to be dazzled by outward [illegible] circumstances, and mine is one that would disdain to offer them. I have a mind that, if not equal, can at least understand and value yours, and I have a heart which, if you love me not, is faithful; and one, dear [illegible], that could be very happy. Will you render it impossible?"

"Leave me, sir, I entreat you," she cried, turning away her face; "leave me, before I lose the power to hear you!"

"Leave you!" William cried in anguish. "Alas! what have I done to deserve this —this hatred?"

"I do not hate you, Mr. Herbert," she cried, bursting into tears.

"I have seen you unhappy," William cried, with eagerness; "and if I thought there was the slightest particle of selfishness in your generous bosom, I would say that the great endeavour of my life shall be to make you happy. But that I know would have no weight with you: I appeal to your justice and your heart. You have taken an interest in my fate—you have shewn me how I could be happy—but you will have made me unspeakably miserable, if you make the means of happiness unattainable. Did you wish to make me miserable? Will you do nothing for my happiness?"

"I have no power to make you happy," she said, in a low voice.

"No power, Miss Walton!" he exclaimed; "you have every power, if you have the will. Your heart is free, or I should not have tasted the pleasure of your society. You do not love another?"

"Oh, no, no—I do not!" she cried, eagerly, with a flood of tears.

"Then, how shall I teach you to love me?" Miss Walton—or, suffer me to use the name which I have never yet uttered, save to myself and to God—Mary, dear Mary, I love you very dearly. You do not hate me—what is there wanting to love? If you could love me, Mary, dearest, how very happy we could be! I have seen about you marks of splendour to which you are, doubtless, accustomed. I cannot offer you such things; but I do not lament my incapability; for the love which you would accept must be independent of them. My fortune will be humble but respectable; and I will tell you what you must expect in the home which I can offer. The house we should inhabit stands on the banks of the Thames, at such a distance from it, that we could see it from our windows, sparkling among the beds of flowers. There are woody hills behind, green meadows and a glorious landscape before it. In the early

morning we would look to our garden together —then we would walk abroad in the lanes, and the fields, and the woods; you with your pencil, and I with my books, and win many a blessing from afflicted hearts, which we would comfort in our walks. Then we would return from the intellectual and sacred employment, and the glory of your music should fill the house, and our voices should rise together in songs of joy. Then would I translate Plato, and Homer, and Virgil to you, and you should read Dante and Tasso to me; or we would sit, side by side, turning over the pages of our own poets and philosophers, and gather into our minds the united wisdom of all the ages of Britain, with that accomplished lady and good woman, my mother, sitting by and smiling on the happiness of her children. Alas! all this would be little to a heart which clings to the pomps of a fashionable life; but you love virtue too well to set your affections on such things; and though you might adorn the loftiest station, I am sure

the occupations of the life which I offer are better adapted to your tastes. To lead the guilty to repentance, and the miserable to happiness—to heal the sick in body for earth, and the sick in spirit for heaven—are some of the duties of my life; and with you, Mary, life would glide on a stream of unsullied happiness, of enlightened virtue, so that people should turn, as we passed by, and say—'how happy they are!'"

Miss Walton fell on her knees, and bent her face to the sofa, crying, with a broken voice—"O God of mercy, be merciful to me!"

William bent over her, and whispered—"Mary, why are you distressed? Why do you appeal from me to God? Do you pity me, Mary, without the power to love me?"

She remained on her knees, and bent her face closer to the sofa, in silence.

"May I not hope, Mary?" he whispered.

"No, no; there is no hope—none—none!" was the reply.

"Then God be merciful to me!" he cried, and fell back on the sofa.

Was it a dream? He felt an arm round his neck, a soft hand spread over his forehead, and one of his hands clasped in another. He felt that his cheek was lying with a close pressure on a bosom that was heaving tumultuously, he heard the words, "Dear William," close to his face, and felt a woman's soft, sweet breath playing over his lips. When he opened his eyes, he saw that he was lying in Mary's bosom, and that she was gazing in his face with a terrible expression of love and despair. A single moment after their eyes met, she suddenly disengaged herself, and turned away, leaning her face on the arm of the sofa.

"Dear, dear Mary, how have I been blessed!" William whispered, bending over her. "Assuredly, you do not hate me."

"Oh, no, no—I do not!" she replied, with a quick, broken voice.

"Can you love me, Mary?"

She was silent.

"You do not think me better or worthier of you than the generality of men?"

"You are good—too good!" she said.

"You do not fear your relations?"

"I have none to fear, for they have pity on me."

"Dear Mary, will you be mine?"

"O God, what torture!"

"You mock me, Miss Walton," he said.

She answered him not a word, but looked at him full in the face, with such an expression of tenderness and misery, that it went straight to the heart, and fell at her feet, saying, "Forgive me, Mary,—forgive me!"

She took his hand, and sunk down again by her side. He felt her cheek resting on his shoulder, then it sunk on her breast, and she was in his arms; her face hid, and clinging to his for a little minute; then by a violent effort, she suddenly withdrew herself from his embrace, and started from the sofa

William sat for a while, engaged in pleasant thoughts on the tenderness Mary had confessed, and hoping now that he might take her down to his own home, when he returned from the university. Her shawl, hat, and gloves lying on the table, prevented the fears that her long absence would have occasioned. But after waiting nearly an hour, he grew uneasy, and rang the bell, when the servant came up, and informed him that the young lady was not in the house, but had rushed down the stairs into the street, without hat or shawl, and without saying a word to any one as she passed. He went down and questioned her master, and was surprised to hear that the man knew nothing of the young lady, save that she had called a few times in her carriage, to purchase articles of his trade, and that she had hired his rooms on the very day when William met her there. He asked how his note had been delivered, and learned that the lady had happened to call at the shop. There was something in the tradesman's

manner that compelled William to believe him, and, without asking any more questions, he merely left a note for Miss Walton, and left the house, almost believing that he had seen Mary for the last time, wondering what strange circumstances were at the bottom of her mysterious behaviour, and looking forward without hope to those brighter prospects, which, until very lately, had seemed to comprise all things necessary to happiness.

He called daily at Cecil-street, and visited the theatre nightly, in the lingering hope of meeting Miss Walton: and it was not until the time at which his unknown benefactor expected him to be at the university, that he gave up the pursuit. Even then he might have persisted, if he had had money of his own; but Mr. Burgess had engaged a fresh clerk, and William was too conscientious to apply the money in the bank to any purpose save that which the giver of it intended. He left London, visited his mother, and went to the university.



BOOK THE TENTH.

CHAPTER I

If I happen to have been [illegible] **interest my readers in the** [illegible] in the narrative, these introductory chapters will appear about as much in place as the vase before meat of the old patriarch, which sometimes lasted till not only the dinner, but the devotion of the pious worthies, had waxed cold luxurient as the poor fellows might be when after a hard morning's ride, wearied or tight they came to the table plentifully supplied with savory and smoking beef and mutton and while they listened to Mr. Standfirmintheruth's

CHAPTER I.

If I happen to have been so fortunate as to interest my readers in the persons who figure in this narrative, these introductory chapters will appear about as much in place as the grace before meat of the old puritans, which sometimes lasted till not only the dinner, but the devotion of the pious worthies, had waxed cold. Impatient as the poor fellows might be, when, after a hard morning's ride, watch, or fight, they came to the table plentifully supplied with savoury and smoking beef and mutton; and while they listened to Mr. Standfirminthefaith's

grace, which sounded more like to common eternal and incomprehensible, interlard their fresh, bright, delicious colour of the untouched joint, decline and fade away by comparison to the rude air, the clear clear-like quiet element mottled with a filthy scum of dirty tho' perfumed smoke dwindle away into the homely oil that steam from the sixth days of roasted flesh, blunt their own patience rapidly evaporate through the influence of the severest carnal disappointment; they could not be more certainly annoyed than your true novel reader, when, expecting a piece of savoury narrative, he is put off with a mere dry disquisition.

But authors always were, and always will be, egotists. It is beyond our power to suffer a person to enjoy our works without knowing something of the clever person that wrote them. Yet as there is a right and a wrong time for all things, and in the present case the only question was, whether I should intrude my opinions on the reader at the changing of the various

courses, or while he was actually devouring what was set before him, I chose the former. I thought it best to bestow my tediousness on the reader between the divisions of my narrative, rather than in the midst of it; not, believe me, because, as the more prominent place, it was the more likely to be read, but because it would be the more readily unattended to. I hate to cheat a reader into thinking, when he does not intend or wish it, and thinks he is reading a narrative which does not require any thinking; and I therefore put my thinking into such places as such a judicious reader may avoid.

I did, indeed, at the commencement of this narrative, request that these chapters might not be skipped, and promised that they should always mean something or other, and bear some kind of relation to the work; but I may as well imitate the general practice of reformed characters, and, as I am now come to a point at which hypocrisy would be useless, turn honest,

and confess that what odium still attaches to the profession, a kind of plausible apology for introducing what might otherwise be considered; I confess this the more readily, still keeping from my own experience, that, like authors, publishers even they will, do make egregious fools of themselves in spite of their good sense. I should doubt, that many a fair volume has been consigned to the pastry-cook, the trunk-maker, or even to a more fatal termination—notwithstanding the author's assurances that the book was a very good book, and a very clever book, and a book that would be very beneficial to every man, woman, and child in the nation.

If, then, dear reader, you fancy I have presumed on the power which authorship gives me over you, in putting in these introductory chapters, which you care nothing about, and cannot read, I would be happy to make the promise which every repentant sinner is willing to make when he has secured the profits of his crime—I would promise not to do it again; but having

now come to the last book, I fear that promise would not much avail me. But as I wish to part from you on good terms, I would beg you to notice, that this present last introductory chapter contains a much greater amount than any of the preceding ones, of the greatest merit which can possibly exist in an introduction, a grace before meat, or any other prefatory form — by which I mean that it is shorter.

CHAPTER II.

When we last beheld the family of the Herberts at Burnside, they were about to build the cottage which had been destroyed through the carelessness of their attendant, old Mrs. Hobson. Fanny remained at home, partly in consequence of her mother's wish, and partly from a feeling similar to that which had caused her mother to request it—namely, disgust at some of the duties imposed on her in servitude, and a loathing of the danger to which she had been exposed. She had an insurmountable objection to return to a situation of labour in which she had been

subjected to such insults; she doubted the truth of all professions out of her own family, from having been deceived in those of such apparent purity and benevolence uttered by Lord Collington, and dreaded, at least for the present, to leave the home where her safety was assured.

There was no delay in setting about the new cottage, since Mr. Wilson insisted on being allowed to provide the means, which Mrs. Herbert could not refuse, as not only had he the right to consider himself the cause of the accident, but she was in a state of such utter poverty, as not to be able to refuse the good offices of any friend. Thomas Wilson had not studied architecture very deeply, and the cottage, if it were to be like the former one, did not require a great amount of architectural knowledge; yet it somehow happened, that not a stage of the operations could be got through without his personal attendance, which was the more to be wondered at, as, during the

two or three years from his first journey to London, down to the fire, he had not been able to visit Burnside more than once. One would have thought him suddenly smitten with a love of building, or with a renewed veneration for his birth-place, like that which a man feels after thirty years campaigning in the East; though, perhaps, after all, it was only anxiety respecting his aged grandmother. But certain it is, that in the course of a week after his return to London with William, and before the rubbish had been cleared away from the site of the former cottage, Thomas Wilson was again sitting at Mrs. Herbert's fireside, considering with her the different plans suggested for the new edifice. After staying a couple of days he returned to London; but before the end of the next week he appeared again; and the oftener he came, the more he seemed to love the place, and the more reluctantly he left it.

On the second visit, as he returned from calling on an old friend, he met Mrs. Herbert and Miss

Fanny, who were going to call on a sick friend. He could not do less than attend them to the house, and wait for them; and, perhaps, it was the very sweetest moment of his life to be, for the first time, escorting two ladies for whom he felt so profound a respect, and to feel on his arms the soft pressure of the fair hands of the two ladies whom he looked on as the worthiest and noblest of created beings.

Not long afterwards, William Herbert joined the little circle of friends, buoyant with the expectation of good fortune promised by his anonymous correspondent, and so highly had the former ploughboy risen in the opinion of those who were formerly his patrons, that, as a matter of course, he became a partner in all their consultations and arrangements, and a constant companion in the little pedestrian excursions along the highways and byways around the village, which William projected as a sweet relaxation between the dead-alive occupations of a lawyer's office, and the severer

studies of the university, for which he was preparing himself.

The party naturally divided itself into William and his mother, and Wilson and Fanny. Nor when William had departed was this arrangement entirely overthrown. The distinction between the individuals had been destroyed, never to be reconstructed; what the two families had been was utterly forgotten—mutual benefits had brought them all to a state of equality. If Mrs. Herbert had lost her companion, Fanny had not lost hers, and he was by no means inclined to forget or neglect the privilege which it conferred. Wilson and Fanny visited their old acquaintances unattended by her mother, and sometimes when there was no acquaintance to see, they went out into the fields to observe the beautiful operations of nature, and perhaps to nourish the beautiful operations of their own hearts, not the least exquisite work of Nature or Providence.

They were both very young—both very guile-

less; they had arrived at the same conclusion from opposite directions. Fanny, too young, in the time of her family's greatness, to form an exalted opinion of the factitious excellence of rank and station, and disgusted with the treatment, and terrified by the attempt on her honour, from persons in the station in which her birth entitled her to mix—Wilson, rising from the lowest point in society, to one in which family wealth had enabled him to mix with the highest, indignant at the contumely with which one he worshipped had been treated because she was poor; —both of them felt that there was a happiness in the world for good hearts, independent of rank and station; and perhaps when the two young creatures felt this, in their own secret hearts, each made a personal application of the principle to another not far off.

However this might be, the oftener they met, and the longer they walked, the more contented they were with the limited circle of their acquaintance; and whatever their feelings towards

the possible

CHAPTER III.

In the foregoing pages so many allusions have been made to William Herbert's love of study, and his early and long-enduring admiration of the ministerial office, that it will be unnecessary to dilate on them now, or to describe the minutiæ of his college-life, which was necessarily one course of hard labour, to make up for the time lost, since the death of his father compelled him to leave the university. Not that that time had, properly speaking, been lost, since in it he had gathered a great deal of practical knowledge of the world, which must be of

the first importance in the sacred office to which he aspired, as well as a considerable acquaintance with books in the hours which he could devote to reading. But the routine of study necessary to stand an examination had necessarily been interrupted; and, whatever his general knowledge, he was compelled to resume his studies at pretty nearly the same point as he had attained when he left the university.

That labour was a labour of love—his heart was in it; the most exciting hope of his life was concerned in it; there was only one drawback—he could not forget that woman. That lady, so beloved, came between his thoughts and ancient learning, and drew him away to the contemplation of happiness, for which the fulfilment of all other hopes could not offer a satisfactory equivalent. That lady, whose mysterious unhappiness had given him so much pain, was always present to his mind; she appeared to be always sitting at his side, he addressed her involuntarily in the midst of his studies, and a

thousand times started up to look for the vision of beauty and excellence, which disappeared as soon as his reason awoke to his actual circumstances.

His hours of relaxation were not spent at the card-table, at drinking-bouts, in boating, in fishing, in hunting. The hours he spared from study were employed in visiting the happy circle at Burnside, and in seeking through London for Miss Walton. In the latter employment there was more anxiety and disappointment than pleasure; he could not discover the slightest trace of her he sought. But the visit to Burnside was of a widely different nature; he could not help finding pleasure there. He was so cordially welcomed, and so fondly admired by every member of the family, that nothing but the memories which he carried in his bosom could have prevented him from being perfectly happy. The cottage had been put in rapid progress immediately after his departure for the university; but on his first

visit, he was surprised to find it a larger building, and in many respects of greater pretensions, than the former one. As he thought it far beyond their means of support, he remonstrated with his mother, and she with young Wilson, but in vain.

About half a year after he entered the university, he heard that Wilson, by the death of his grandfather, had come into possession of a considerable fortune; and when he next visited Burnside, he found the cottage not only completed, but furnished in a very beautiful manner, and the garden laid out with more regard to ornament than use. In short, Mrs. Herbert's little estate seemed more like the residence of a person of easy fortune, than what it had been formerly—the hut and garden of a labourer.

But this extravagance was explained in due time. Mr. Wilson was not so disinterested in this affair as he may have seemed to be; since not only had he not built the cottage for Mrs. Herbert, but he had done it merely for himself,

after which he had the assurance to ask her to make him a present of Fanny, to help him take care of it. This request, however, was not received with the astonishment and rebuke the reader may think it deserved; for Mrs. Herbert, being of a kind and liberal disposition, granted it with pleasure, without receiving any very violent reproaches from her daughter for making such a transfer—at least, if she made any, I never heard of them.

This information was conveyed to William by a letter from his mother, inviting him to the wedding, in which, she said, there was but one particular that displeased her. She had hoped that whenever Fanny married, William might perform the ceremony; and that this might be done, she had recommended the young people to put off the marriage a year or two, until William was in orders. It was the first time in her life that Fanny had failed to obey her, and even now, perhaps, she might have been obedient if left to herself. But Wilson was very

impatient—he would not wait; he was very urgent, and somehow Fanny did not take her mother's part against him so warmly as she might have done; and so—and so they were to be married immediately.

The day before the wedding-day William started for Burnside, where he expected to arrive in the evening; but, about midway in his journey, as the coach was rattling into a little town, a circumstance utterly unlooked for occurred, which prevented his going further that night. Among the persons that were walking on the causeway at the entrance of the town, and were probably inhabitants of the town, he observed one man more than the rest, from his peculiar feebleness. He was not an old man, but he stooped and was gray, and from the peculiar brownness of his skin, William judged him to be a victim of some distant intemperate climate. But his attention was drawn from the man to a young woman, who was leading and supporting him with an air of extreme tender-

ness. She, like the man, was dressed, not only plainly, but meanly. A common straw bonnet, with one piece of black ribbon, and a black stuff gown, made as plain as that of a domestic servant, might not have excited a very strong interest in every one, but William observed somewhat in the general outline, in the turn of the limbs, in the very movements of the female, that set his heart beating with passionate expectation.

These observations were made in the minute that the coach was following them; but when it had passed, and he turned towards the female, their eyes met, and she started, and seemed to be in extreme terror. What William's emotions were, I need not describe, when I mention that he beheld Miss Walton.

Yes; that discovery stopped his travelling. When the coach arrived at the inn, ordering his luggage to be taken down, he set off at once to meet the lady so mysterious and so beloved. She was, however, not now to be seen. He

walked rapidly a mile out of town, but not a face or form that he met made his heart beat quicker or feel larger, and as evening was rapidly coming on, he was determined the lady was in the town. He walked up and down the half-dozen bits of muddy road flanked with hovels, that were called streets, he looked into every shop-window, and peeped into a few windows that belonged not to shops, he addressed, by a name which they did not own, two ladies whom, in the unlighted gloom, he could not accurately distinguish, and at length was compelled to do what he ought to have done at first—namely, admit Boots into the consultation. An individual in a country town is not exactly like a needle in a bundle of hay; or, at all events, it is a large needle in a very small bundle, which Boots, by the magnetic attraction of gossip, will soon discover. The promise of a handsome recompence soon put that worthy on the scent, and an acquaintance with the ragamuffins and loungers of every

corner of the town soon helped him to the residence of the individual wanted.

As soon as this was gained, William followed Boots to the door of the house which contained the lady, sent him about his business, and rapped at the door. The servant girl who answered his knock and question, said that Miss Walton was in the house, but particularly engaged, and he dared not do other than return to the inn. But it was not possible that he should endure to be refused admittance, in this cold and rude manner, by her who had fixed in his memory for ever the evidences of the purest and most passionate love. He had done nothing to deserve that she should do violence to herself, in order to make him miserable; he had a right, at least, to expect that her heart should follow its own dictates, if he could not claim the same for his own. He could not doubt that he had been turned from the door by Miss Walton's order, and that conviction led to the following note, which he sent by Boots:—

"My dear Miss Walton—What have I done to

make you so steadily avoid me, and even refuse to allow me to speak to you? I have been looking for you nearly two years, and my heart would have broken soon, if I had not found you. Grant me an interview, I beseech you. Everything is going well with me. My mother, my sister, both happy; myself, in the way to all the prosperity I desire—but not happy. There is nothing in the world, nothing—nothing that I care for, but you. Let me speak to you. Do not, I pray you, sentence to a life of misery one who is so grateful, and so dependent on you.

"W. H."

The messenger brought back a note, containing only the words—

"You shall hear from me to-morrow morning.

"M. W."

William sent a letter to his mother, excusing his absence from the wedding. He did not sleep much that night; but he was happier than he had been during the past year. He did not vainly call on sleep to stop the current of anxious and painful thoughts.

CHAPTER IV.

When William arose in the morning, a sealed letter was put in his hands, which he immediately opened and found to be as follows:—

"When we last met, I used all possible modes of entreaty to induce you to leave me to myself; I endeavoured to make you understand that I wished you to forget me, or cease to pursue me; and that my own peace was involved in accomplishing it, which ought to have been a more powerful consideration with you than your own passions. But as that endeavour was

not successful, I must employ a means which will accomplish it, but must fill me with shame and you with regret: I must confess what will force you to leave me to my fate, or if you persist in your endeavours to see me, will prove you indifferent to your own honour, and thereby very much lessen my regret for what you suffer.

"Blush, then, for the passion which you allow to triumph over you—blush for me on whom it is poured, when I tell you that from the first day to the last of our acquaintance, I was a nobleman's mistress! Surely the pang which those words have given you will be the death of love. I could be content to say no more—to let that fact stand naked and alone in your remembrance, and with its hideousness scare away every feeling of tenderness; but while I would have you forget the passion which has hitherto been cherished, I would not have you despise yourself unjustly as the weak victim of my wickedness; I would not have you curse me as the wilful destroyer of your

happiness. Loathe me as you may, I will bear it, and acknowledge that I deserve it. I would rather you should hate me than love me, but while I ask for hate, I claim your pity. Learn now all that you will ever know of me.

"My father was a member of a mercantile house in London, and, passing the greater part of his time abroad, I was placed at school under the general superintendence of my mother's parents, who were tradespeople in a small country town in Oxfordshire. My mother died while I was a child. When I was about twelve years of age, I was at school in a neighbouring county. The governess, an ill-informed and sycophantic woman, as I have reason to lament, was acquainted with and frequently visited by a private tutor in the family of a neighbouring nobleman. His pupil, about five years older than I, once called for him, and being treated with the most profound deference and obsequiousness, was prevailed on to stay longer than he had intended; and in the course of his stay,

I was so unfortunate as to attract his notice. I did not think myself unfortunate then, unquestionably. The whisper of the school-room, the chatter of the bed-room, were not of a nature to make any one of us consider the notice of a gentleman unfortunate; nor were the arts and tricks, the studied politeness, the prepared compliments, the sugared smiles of our vain and affected governess, calculated to correct the ruinous follies of the children. It happened that, after this first interview, the young gentleman came often. He was unchecked, and I was uncautioned by the governess. He meant no more harm than I—the danger my protectress should have seen; but as a compliment to herself would have purchased her soul, it gained very readily what she most courted—permission to visit her house.

"Our studies were French, Italian, music, dancing, and drawing, in which I gained some little proficiency. A little study of morality would have done me greater service, but that

was not taught. Novels, and books of a worse character, were smuggled without difficulty into the school; and smuggled, because we saw our governess read them. These books taught the children very early to set their hearts on gaining admiration, and the notice of any young man of tolerable appearance, not only made one heart proud, but created a bickering and jealousy throughout the school on account of it, which endured until some other excitement was occasioned.

"The notice of a Lacey, the greatest name in the neighbourhood, caused a proportionate degree of jealousy, and to me a proportionate degree of pride; for I will not deny that my heart beat delightedly at the attention I received, although at the same time I have reason to curse my governess, who did not see, or would not guard me against, the danger into which I was falling.

"Not long after this introduction, as my father had been missing two years, he was supposed to

be dead, and I was sent for by my grandfather. I was not sorry to leave school, and when I arrived at my grandfather's house, I regretted nothing that I had left behind. I was entirely my own mistress; my grandparents were very old; they were more childlike than I. My grandfather was my willing but when he should have been my instructor, and my grandmother was my playfellow, when she should have been my friend and guide. I became their master—it was unfortunate for me—I know it now; but I do not blame them. They were ignorant, but they loved me beyond measure. For a year mine was a very happy life; I had possession of as much money as I wanted; I had a house at my disposal; I could walk, read, draw, or play as I chose—no circumstances of human life could be better adapted for happiness.

"About a year after I left school, Mr. Lacey entered the university, which was but a few miles distant, and came over to renew his acquaintance with me. An agreeable person, a good temper, a

respectful manner, to say nothing of a title, were sufficient to turn the head of a girl so vain and ungoarded as I was. But my head was not turned—my heart was not moved. I was a mere child in years, although a woman in stature; and, recollecting my emotions, I can say, that a pleasing woman would have interested me more than this pleasing man, excepting that I was gratifying that pernicious, that ruinous vanity, which I had learned at school. Mr. Lacey was encouraged by my relatives,—not because he was heir to a barony, not because he would be a rich man, not because he was agreeable, but because it pleased me. We were left to ourselves: I not more than fourteen years of age, ignorant of everything I ought to have known, and he not twenty, with probably a great deal of knowledge which I ought to have been lawful of. We were pleased with each other, and I was as unsuspicious of evil as I was utterly unprotected.

But why dwell on details when I have con-

fessed the end? Suffice it to say, that, during the three years which Mr. Lacey spent at the University, we met—not very frequently—once a month, perhaps—and I walked and rode with him, to my own great satisfaction, and the envy of the female community.

"At the end of that time, I was riding on a summer evening with Mr. Lacey, merry and happy as I always was then; I thought not of the progress of time—I cared not for it—all times were alike to me; but as night was coming on, to my surprise I saw the spires of the University immediately before me, and knew that I was twenty miles from home. That I was somewhat alarmed, and wished to return, is certain; but as a fresh horse was required, I went on into the city. We went into the hotel, and took refreshment while the gig was got ready. It was a summer night, and grew to a late hour before daylight totally disappeared. I was alarmed at the lateness of the hour. Mr. Lacey spoke of the pleasures of London, where I had never been—of theatres

balls, concerts, parks, and palaces; he described in glowing terms the magnificence of the house prepared for him by his family; he spoke with the utmost tenderness of his attachment to me; he suggested that we should go to London together. The temptation offered I did not withstand. I was pleased at the moment—I had no fear, no regret, though no sensation of vice —I consented. The gig was immediately at the door, and Mr. Lacey drove rapidly towards London, intending to stay that night at Henley, because—I shame to say it—he was so well known in Oxford. As we stopped at Henley, a horseman rode furiously to the inn-door, calling for a fresh horse: this man Mr. Lacey knew, and spoke to, and found him to be an express messenger from his mother, announcing the sudden and desperate illness of his father, and urging his immediate attendance. Mr. Lacey instantly offered to send me home by the servant, or to leave me at the inn for the next day's coach; but I felt that I had gone too far to

recede.—I was afraid to return,—I was afraid to be by myself at the inn, and preferred to go on. A chaise was procured, and in three hours we were in London.—Mr. Lacey having spoken of nothing but his father all the way; for I learned afterwards that, whatever his faults, he very tenderly loved his father.

"The servant ordered the chaise to be stopped in one of the squares, but Mr. Lacey bade him drive on, and finally stopped it at a house in a handsome street near the Regent's-park. He knocked at the door, and after whispering a moment with the servant, desired me to walk in, and consider the house at my own disposal; said that he would see me or write to me immediately, and drove away to his father's house.

"The house in which I was thus placed was not very large, but was furnished with a magnificence exceedingly beyond what I had ever seen; but what was of more importance to me afterwards, it contained a very large library, and some very good musical instruments. With these I amused

myself from morning till night, perfectly at ease, and careless of the future; and that the innocence of my intentions was at least equal to my ignorant unconsciousness of danger in all that I had done, will be proved by the fact, that although for a fortnight after Mr. Lacey left me at the door of the house, I neither saw nor heard from him, I felt no disappointment, I expressed no surprise, but amused myself perfectly to my satisfaction, with books and music. At the end of a fortnight, Mr. Lacey, now Lord A——, called on me, having just returned from burying his father in Scotland. He did not stay long: he was oppressed with grief, and possibly ashamed of his occupation at the hour in which his father was dying. He behaved to me with the delicacy of a brother; he said that a distinguished relative had been suddenly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to a Continental Court, and that he had been urgently requested to accompany him. He wished me to be with him, but as he frankly declared that we could not go together, I de-

clined. He then said that, probably, in a short time he might be able to fetch me, or might stay but a short time abroad, as the embassy was sent to accomplish only one object, which might not take many weeks. He gave me the address of half a dozen celebrated professors of the arts which I had begun to study, and desired me to engage them, and practise industriously; gave me unlimited credit with a banker; put an old housekeeper with me to be a companion and guardian, and had prepossessed her in my favour by a history of me not true; and finally gave me command of the house, besought me to please myself in everything, and to write to him if I wished for anything that was wanting.

"You will say that this liberality to a person in my situation was extraordinary. It was so; but Lord A—— was a mere youth; he had known me ever since I was a child; he had no use for this house at present, as he had become possessed of the family mansion; and he did not suppose he should be away long. I saw Lord

A—— no more after that morning—I was sorry for it. By his uncommon generosity he deserved that I should be sorry. But the sorrow was of a very light nature—it endured only for an hour. The housekeeper was a quiet, motherly creature who loved me, and was always with me. I had masters immediately—the most eminent in London: with one I sang, with another played, with another drew; I read Dante, and Schiller, and Moliere, with others; the housekeeper was my companion in my drives and walks, and she took me to theatres, concerts, and picture galleries; or if I stayed at home, an old library, and a constant succession of new works, a passion for music, and all the means of gratifying it, made the time pass away cheerfully. In short, every external circumstance which is supposed to be necessary to happiness, was within my reach—nay was in my possession.

"And was I happy? Yes, I was happy. Happier than I had ever been before or since—happier in a certain way—not so happy as I am

in this moment of sharp torture, when I feel that I am doing my duty. It was the happiness of a human being who fears nothing, who regrets nothing, and perhaps who hopes nothing—of one who can accomplish every wish, and whose mind is therefore without either evil or good agitation. You will suppose that a thought of my good old relatives sometimes crossed my mind. It did so, with a slight sensation of regret. I cared little for them—they had never taught me to respect them; and while they were lavishing on me a love, whose riches were beyond the value of a world—a love which would have given up their bodies to torture and their lives to destruction, to give me a moment's pleasure—that love was of such an indulgent form, such a mere humouring, fondling, idolatrous passion—it put their fortune, their will, the slightest and the most important of their circumstances so entirely at my disposal, that while I gave them my love, they did not acquire my respect, as they did not seek

it. I loved them as a child loves a plaything, a servant, or any object entirely in his power. A young child does not, and cannot value the love even of a parent. It obeys the authority; it does not comprehend the depth and the richness of the love. It is only after the accumulated interests of maturity—after experience of trials and passions, that the heart can estimate the value of a father's or of a mother's love. If I had had a father or a mother to exercise over me a controlling love—to watch over me, and talk to me of the nature of society and of my own heart, I could not have been prevailed on to leave them; but I departed from my grandparents, and continued from them with not much greater reluctance than that with which a child resigns a toy, or anything which amuses. I was in a sphere of higher enjoyment now than when at home, and I could not have returned, unless some overpowering appeal had been made to my heart.

"When, at length, that appeal was made, it

reached me too late. I had left Oxfordshire about six months when the advertisement caught my eye, which eventually took me to Mr. Burgess's office. The first time I saw it, I fancied that it applied to me, although I could not imagine its meaning. I procured the paper daily for a week or so, and as the advertisement continued, I gradually became more convinced that I was alluded to, until at length I ventured to call on Mr. Burgess. The consequence you now know if you knew not before. I received an abstract of my grandfather's will, I received his letter in your hand-writing, and I learned that the good old man was dead. At that moment I was no longer a child; I was no longer happy in the unconsciousness of guilt; I no longer neglected or despised my grandfather's love. The act which I had committed was no longer the inconsiderate folly of ignorance. I was alone in the world. The love of a relative which has grown up with you from your birth, and which is fixed in your personal identity,

without regard to physical or mental qualities—this love, which, though less noble than that which merit has acquired, is that which makes one happy, and without which life has no value. This love so precious, I had slighted—I had cast away.

"The first glance at that letter shewed me what I had done: I was filled with remorse; no wretch under the sun would have envied me. It was a mingling of light and darkness. There had been a Providence over me to guard me from guilt and despair. I had been in Lord A——'s power, thoughtless and regardless of what had happened, and what was most likely to happen. I had been saved by a series of accidents. Had one of those I have mentioned been different, had Lord A——'s father been attacked a day later, had we missed the express on the road, had not the embassy been appointed, or had not Lord A—— been urged to belong to it, I should unquestionably be now what I think of with horror. I must have been

dependent, not only on one man's love, honour, pity, or taste, but I might have become eventually the vilest wretch that pollutes the earth, unless a feeling, such as possesses me now, had awakened me, and led me to a quick end of my infamy.

"But very little comfort at that moment could be extracted from the consciousness of my own escape. I had that most terrible sight continually before my eyes—an old man in his senses crying and reproaching me on his death-bed—an old man that loved me; and that love which I ought to have cherished, I had made the instrument of agony, not to be relieved save by death. I learnt then the nature of remorse; but I did not learn all its consequences then. You were the first person I ever conversed with whose knowledge was of a sounder, and more regular kind than my own; and this, and the exceeding modesty and gentleness of your manner pleased me at our first interview. When we next met, the warm and brotherly tenderness

of your care impressed me as much as my own misery, and I remembered it constantly. I was glad to meet you in the Park. I could not help fancying you wished to meet me, and I returned that wish. The reason why I would not see you at Lord A——'s house you can imagine—my position there was not of such a nature as to make me willing to meet there a person I respected, and I engaged apartments in Cecil Street, of a tradesman with whom we dealt. I learned the services you had rendered to my grandfather, and that his letter was written by you. I was grateful. Remorse for the injury I had inflicted on the old man, took the form of gratitude towards the person who had benefited him. My gratitude would have been exerted in pecuniary services if you had not been proud; you refused my offers, and, as I could not bear that you, who had shielded him whom I had so neglected, who had spared me the agony of having brought him to a miserable death, should escape from my knowledge and gratitude, I

offered what I believed would produce other meetings, thoughtless of consequences—thoughtless of everything but my present emotions.

"Our future meetings were not all pleasure to me. Your sentiments and principles, which I thought somewhat severe, because they had never been addressed to me before, and I had never met with a person whom I believed to act on them, I could not help admiring; but I often carried away, in the centre of my heart, the condemnation which you had pronounced in the abstract, and which I applied to myself.

"But this pain I am thankful for, and I was then. Grateful for your services, and pleased with yourself, I paid great attention to all you said, and the habit of conversing with you shamed me out of my thoughtlessness; it made me reflect—it made me acquire principles. Had there been no reason for my delight in those evening meetings, besides what I derived from seeing a benefactor, and improving from his

admonitions, I should never willingly have put an end to them. But there was another source of enjoyment deep in my heart, and directing all my actions, of whose presence I was not conscious. The delight of the moment unopposed by an obstacle, unscrutinized by others, unexamined by myself, filling with spirit, with a new and brighter and more elastic life, and rendering day and night, and all thoughts and circumstances of the world and of myself beautiful and happy—that delight was such as to overpower my faculties, or rather to turn them all into one channel, of which you were the end. There was not a moment of the day in which I did not whisper to my own heart something respecting the coming meeting, and many times I slept in Cecil-street, and waited there the whole day, that I might be ready in the evening, and that I might indulge in delightful thoughts, which seemed more delightful in that house than anywhere out of it. My ignorance of this new, and unspeakable, and

increasing delight, which seemed engrafted into my very nature, could not last long. The very first time I saw you in pain, unhappy for your mother's misfortune, in the depth, the profoundness of my sympathy, a thousand times deeper with you, than yours with your mother, I learned what was passing in my own bosom. The offer you made to introduce me to your mother and sister, whom I could have adored, shewed me in all its horrors the nature of my situation. I knew that I loved you, that I must ever love you, and that my love could never be happy.

"I do not affect hesitation in confessing this. An unsullied woman would compel you to extract such an acknowledgment from looks and actions, rather than from words: but the amiable hypocrisies of modesty are no longer my privilege. If two human beings can be in a situation which compels them to be sincere, we are those two. We, I hope, shall never meet again, and the strength of the passion which has filled our hearts, and must leave its

relics in them for ever, compels me to speak out now.

"I would have been introduced to your mother; I would have confessed my situation; I would have been advised by her if I had not loved you. I had no pride—I could have taken any reproof—I could have submitted to any penance; but at that moment, taken by surprise, I could not bear to lose your esteem. Your good opinion was dearer to me, in that sudden consciousness of love, than all other possessions. I begged you not to meet me again. I could bear to be parted from you, and live on recollection; but I dared not make a confession which would not only have parted us, but fixed in my bosom for ever the belief that I was an object of contempt and hatred to him who could have killed me with a single angry word. You have loved me—you have passed through the whole series of feelings, from the first awakening of pleasure up to the self-forgetting adoration of a perfect love, which would not only sacrifice

all things to one object, as the most excellent and glorious thing on earth, but would sacrifice itself. So far, you can understand what I felt; for however a woman may hide her feelings—however closely she may keep them within her heart—there is not a depth of adoration or self-sacrifice in the heart of a man, nor has any ever been imagined by a poet, which a woman does not feel when she loves, and which I did not feel. But you cannot imagine anything beyond the rapture—you cannot comprehend the overflowing love of the person who deserves not to be happy—the love that grows up along with despair. You know not what it is to feel that you have no right to the sweetness of love which is ever springing up in your heart; you know not the anguish of sitting beside the person under whose foot you would willingly lay your neck or bosom to be trod on, out of a depth of love and submission; and while you are listening to words of tenderness, and your ear catches the sigh of a noble passion, to feel

that only a false character, which conceals your infamy, shields you from hatred and scorn.

"Such was love to me when I knew that I loved. Confession to you, and unprepared separation from you, were equally to be dreaded; and though daily I determined that I would sunder a connexion that must have so painful a result, my resolution failed when I met you. At length, however, I was roused to action; I received a letter from Lord A., announcing an early visit to London. In one hour I had left the house, never to look on it again, and never to speak to an inmate of it. That was the day on which I announced the end of our acquaintance. I sent back the harp and books the next day, and took lodgings in Cecil-street,—yes, I was nigh. The place was sacred; I loved to look on that house, into that window, and—and I sometimes saw you. I thought I might have to meet you once more. I did not wish to disappoint you. I wished pain to fall on no one but myself. You required a meeting; the

generosity of your disposition pressed on me offers which would have been more welcome to me than the highest places in the world. The struggle between my inclination and my duty were too great for my body and mind: I was laid on a sick bed, from which I did not move for many weeks.

"But what need to tell more of my history? What need to say what thoughts have passed through my mind in the twenty months of our separation?—what feelings of a heart which I was compelled to disappoint?—what visions of happiness which my own conduct made impossible? Knowing the one criminal act of my life, you know all that you ought to know. I may just say that within the last week I accidentally heard that my father, who was supposed to be dead, was in the workhouse of the town where he was born, having lately returned penniless from Africa, where a long course of privation and cruelty, which I need not relate, had broken down his constitution. I set off imme-

diately to rescue him, and we are on the way to a small retired village, where, with the little income I possess, and the labour of my hands, I hope to be able to soothe the pains of his disease. Would to God that those were with me now whom I neglected, and suffered to go to the grave in sorrow.

"Such is the history of the events of my life, which have placed us in such a painful relation. It is right, perhaps, that you should be acquainted with them; our intimacy gave you the right. It was necessary that you should know what I have done, that you might not despise yourself as a victim of my intentional wickedness. But to accomplish that purpose I have described no feeling, save as it explained an action. The secret workings of my heart and mind are a history which you will never read. The conclusion alone which I have come to is necessary to be known—and you know it. You despise a woman whom nature had not endowed with an instinct of prudence. But if

your passion be as noble as I believe it to be, while it consents to disappointment, it will rejoice to learn that it has not been placed altogether unworthily; not placed on one who in all circumstances must have disgraced it. No; if I had been blessed like you, with a mother, pure and enlightened, who would have developed my mind and heart, and guided them in the road which she had trodden with honour and respect, I could have been worthy of a good man's love. In this moment, when I feel myself cut off for ever from all the domestic connexions which a woman looks forward to with such delight, I feel their unspeakable charm. Yet while I lament the impossibility of obtaining them, I bless God for the love which has saved me from ruin, and through a course of pain has exalted me to a comprehension of virtue, which I trust my future life will not disgrace.

"But the virtue which I now love requires for its perfect trial and establishment that I do not permit myself to receive the reward

due to virtue which has not been sullied. I can no longer claim or receive the happiness which I could merit.

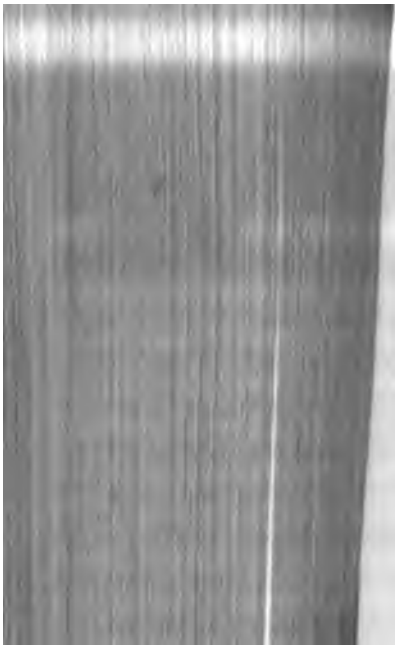
"What though I never submitted to any unseemly freedom from a man, and can hold up my hands before my Maker without a consciousness of intentional wickedness, it is impossible that I should claim any credit for it! I have placed myself in a position where I could not have offered—where I should not have thought of offering—resistance to infamy, and where resistance would have been ridiculous. If I have been saved from that last horror it has been by chance, or Providence. All the guilt of a fall is mine; I have placed myself in a position to become infamous; in a position which the world pronounces to be infamous, and on which it will justly inflict the punishment due to infamy; and could I, with this remembrance—with this liability to be denounced—could I link my fate to yours, of so elevated and pure a character? Your duties are the noblest which fall to the lot of man; you

are the very instrument of the Divine mercy, through whom he raises the unhappy to hope and the guilty to repentance; through whom, indeed, our divine Maker rectifies to individuals the weakness, the misery, the condemnation of the race. If in any man the utmost purity is absolutely necessary—purity not only of body and soul, but of connexion—it is the minister of religion. He ought to stand by the guilty with an authority it is impossible to slight, the mediator between God and man: neither his father nor his child, nor even his friend, much less his wife, should be one that even prejudice could point at in scorn.

"And shall I be the one to give you shame—shall I, living in your house—at your side—nay, in your bosom, continually fear, and make you fear, a discovery that would overwhelm us with terror and shame? Shall I lessen your usefulness, and check your justifiable ambition? How can I tell that you may not rise to honour and distinction in your profession? yet the

higher you rose, the more probable would be this dreadful discovery, and the more distinguished my torture and yours. Our situations are fixed —they must be separate. We shall never meet again; when you receive this I shall be far away!

"Farewell—farewell, William. If my feelings ought to interest you, I would say what they are as I write 'Farewell.' But it must not be; our paths lie wide asunder. You will follow your course upwards in your holy profession with an unsullied name, and with growing respect and honour; I mine, in solitude, in shame, and humility—in humility which dares not hope to rise. We are separate—look for me no more. Forget me! William Herbert must no longer murmur the words 'Mary Walton' in the thoughtful quiet of night; Mary Walton must no longer breathe the words 'William Herbert,' even to her own heart. I say not that I will forget you; I will not say what I do not know to be true; but I conjure you to forget me for ever! William, forgive me, the first and



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CHAPTER V.

When William Herbert had read the above letter, he was filled with dismay and sorrow; but he did not dream of obeying the request which it contained—he hastened in search of the writer. What his intentions were, perhaps, he did not know; a dim thought of pity, and forgiveness, and oblivion, floated over his mind; but he was too much excited to resolve on anything saving to see Miss Walton. But he was fated not to be put to the taste of choosing between love and delicacy—Miss Walton had left the town immediately after sending the letter,

and was now probably a hundred miles off. William stood awhile stupified with sorrow. The rapture of the late meeting was scarcely exhausted, and yet he knew that there was a line drawn between himself and the fruition of his hopes, that probably he should never pass. He would have pursued the lady even at a venture; but in the very rising of that wish, he could not but feel that fate had separated them by a more terrible and lasting evil than poverty, or imprisonment, or even death itself; since it had fixed in one of their minds an immovable conviction that they ought not to meet.

He staggered back to his room, and after a violent burst of grief, continued his journey to Burnside. He found very happy faces and hearts there—the young couple rejoicing in the beautiful prospect before them of prosperity and love: and the old people glad because the children were glad, and apparently placed beyond the reach of the casualties of fortune and common life. William was not insensible to

the happiness he saw—he was fervently thankful to Providence for it: but his pleasure was continually broken in upon by a thought of wonder and pity which was never to leave him; and he frequently stood in the midst of the cheerful circle, aghast and bewildered, as at the presence of a terrible vision.

He saw now the reason for building a cottage somewhat larger than the former one. The young couple were to live there, and Mrs. Herbert and the grandmother were to stay with them for the present. None of them could endure the idea that those that had clung together so faithfully in adversity, should separate at the first coming of prosperity and happiness. William found rooms prepared for himself, as secluded and apt for study as his own in college; it was expected that he would like to stay a few weeks, at least, while the new-married pair were taking a trip through the country. But his heart was not in tune for pleasure; he was pained at the attention excited by his visible

misery, and he longed for the gloom of college, as a refuge congenial to his own disposition. As soon, therefore, as Wilson and Fanny had left their wedding-breakfast, and started from Burnside, William turned his face towards the university, for the first time in his life indifferent to the anxiety of his mother, who, perceiving his want of composure, observed him with an air of tenderness, that he knew claimed or sought his confidence. But he could not make up his mind to utter to any living being a word of the information which so tormented him. He hastened towards the university.

As he passed through the town where Miss Walton had been, he could not help inquiring whether she had been seen since his departure; but he learned nothing which could induce him to delay his journey.

From the day that he entered his college, he never quitted it save twice, when he took a hasty trip to London, to inquire for Miss Walton, at Cecil-street.

The anxiety and trouble of his mind did not interfere with his studies—a distaste towards the world and its business confined him to his room, where he was almost compelled to labour. The solitary life of the student gained him a reputation with the older and more monkish dignitaries; his humility made him many friends. He went up for examination with a certain degree of repute attached to his name, and he did not forfeit it. If he were not the first man of his standing, he was one of the first. In due time, having taken a degree, he received ordination.

It was a proud day for Mrs. Herbert when William preached his first sermon in Roseley Church, and she saw in the eyes of the congregation an undisguised admiration of their young pastor. Her sweetest hopes were fulfilled; the child of her love was now in a situation to command respect; she knew that he would act up to the highest demands of his duty. It was also a very proud day for William—the fulfilment of what, for so many years, had been to his imagi-

nation all that could be hoped or wished, for happiness. He was thankful, very thankful, for returning prosperity; but he was thankful in sorrow. So far as his heart was concerned, the passion of latest growth had sunk deeper than all others, and clung ungratified, and rankled in perpetual uneasiness throughout all the changes of happiness around him. It was a proud day also for William to see his mother presiding in his house—the Rectory. Fanny, with a little infant in her bosom, and Wilson proud as the greatest king in Christendom of his wife and child, were there. Their congratulations were very warm, and not without sweetness: yet at that moment, dearly as William loved them all, he would have been glad to be alone—the moment of taking possession of prosperity, as it were, was that in which he most missed her for whose sake prosperity had been most welcome, and without whom it lost its value. He did not love them less than before; but love thrusts aside those dear ones that are safe, to follow the one that is in danger or is missing.

Although William pressed his sister and brother to prolong their stay beyond its proposed limits, and afterwards accompanied them into Gloucestershire, where he stayed some days with them, he was undoubtedly not sorry when he found himself alone at the rectory—alone with his mother, I mean—for in no misfortune, in no disgrace, in no possible circumstances of human life could he have wished her absent, thought her in his way, or withheld from her long his perfect confidence.

And now, in affluence—young, accomplished, pious, in the society of a parent whom he tenderly loved and respected, and who almost idolized him for the visible virtues of his common life, and perhaps partly for having, by his own exertions, or at all events unassisted by his family, turned the current of their adverse fate, —he might have been happy but for one remembrance. The tables of his library were covered with instruments that were never taken from their cases; the shelves with books that were

never opened; the music-stand with volumes of music that were useless. All the elements of happiness were around him, but not in him—he wanted peace.

He was a pious man, but — a man. He knew that it was an imperative duty to subdue every passion that incapacitated him from doing his duty; yet he knew that it was natural to possess passions, and believed that it was not sinful to indulge such as his. Remembering the pure and intellectual happiness he had enjoyed in London, he thought it not wrong to endeavour to renew it; remembering, the services Miss Walton had rendered him—services greater than any pecuniary ones, he believed that the commonest gratitude compelled him to devote himself to her service.

He was courted by the rich and the intelligent for the quiet integrity and simplicity of his life. His eloquence in the pulpit was admired: perhaps because there was in it human feeling —a personal sympathy with misery, which car-

ried it home to the hearts of the people. He was daily among the sick and the afflicted in the cottages, comforting them with words of consolation and deeds of charity. The poor loved him as much as the rich respected him; but none of these things gave him perfect pleasure—his heart was not with them; the most interesting hours of his life were those which he could spare from works of benevolence in the prosecution of his search for Miss Walton.

The charms of reputation attacked his melancholy, in vain. His long-neglected essay on Universal Charity, by some means, probably through his admiring mother, got into the hands of some of his friends, and he was urgently requested to publish it. This at first he declined, probably from remembering his former trouble with the work; but being not in want of money now, he had not to fear a recurrence of the trouble. He published the work on his own account, to oblige his friends. It ran

rapidly through half-a-dozen editions, bringing solid cash to his purse, and complimentary letters from a score of men renowned in literature: among these was one from his father's friend the Bishop, who gave him a pressing invitation to his palace, which I do not know that he accepted; and another from Mr. Folio, the publisher, offering him a thousand guineas for another work of the same dimensions, which I know that he refused.

The melancholy which oppressed Mr. Herbert would probably for some time be very deep, but could not last long. The disappointment of a youthful passion will not continue to be very bitter after the days of passion are passed. Piety and benevolence will undoubtedly, after a time, reduce the disappointment to a sober regret.

But the history of his love is not quite complete: his remembrance was assured by a circumstance not yet related. About a year after his induction to the Rectory of Roseley, he was called to London to make a final settlement

with the agent of the gentleman from whom the living had been purchased. He then discovered his benefactor. The papers which he had formerly seen appeared to have been drawn up in such a manner as to conceal from him the person to whom he was indebted; but he now, among other papers, received one which was necessary to secure him in possession—a legal document which was obliged to be signed; and this signature, in characters which he could never mistake, was, " Mary Walton."

THE END.

T. C. Savill, Printer, 107, St. Martin's Lane.









